

Wild 126

30 YEARS OF WILDERNESS ADVENTURE HERITAGE

SEA KAYAKING DOWN THE
WEST COAST OF TASMANIA
OFF-TRACK IN THE DAITREE
STEVE VAN DYCK ENCOUNTERS
THE DREADED 'MIN-MINS'
PROFILE: GEOFF MOSLEY
WALKING SHOE SURVEY
TRACK NOTES TO
QUEENSLAND'S CARNARVON
GREAT WALK
30 YEARS, 30 PARKS



The Adventure
continues...

30TH
The Anniversary
Issue



AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE



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Wild

AUSTRALIAN WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Established 1981

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WARNING

The activities covered in this magazine are dangerous. Undertaking them without proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death.

Cover Ian Brown dwarfed by mossy boulders in a side creek of the upper Daintree River (read the story, 'Across the Green Mountains' on page 44), Daintree National Park, Queensland. Grant Dixon

Contents Looking across Lake Jardine to Mt Enza, just after sunset. South-west Tasmania. Michael Wiltens

'I am gobsmacked that the 'Packbed' – a rucksack that turns into a sleeping stretcher and one-person tent – never took off, aside from being the size of a small car (and probably weighing as much), it looks extremely comfortable and the short legs would keep you out of the water in the event of biblical floods..'



30 Years of Wild

We keep our back catalogue of old Wilds in two cardboard boxes in a storeroom downstairs. Occasionally I pull them all out when I am hunting for something I need. The collection is far from being in mint condition, each one well-thumbed by previous generations of editors. Recently, I pulled them out again, digging deep for the bottom of the box, pulling out issue number one – which was put out almost exactly 30 years ago.

By today's standards the cover of the first issue is pretty rough. It features a middling photo of a young woman on skis, garish orange text running down the left side of the page. But, from all reports by contemporary readers, Wild was cutting-edge for its day. While the design and printing of Wild has vastly improved, flicking through the first issue I can see a lot of continuity to today, from the names of departments that still exist, contributors who still write for us, to the types of stories that are included – wild stories. For instance, the first issue has an article about an expedition to paddle Nepal's terrifying Sun Kosi River written by a young John Wilde, that same John Wilde (although a slightly older version) has written a piece in this issue about paddling down the West Coast of Tasmania. To me, both articles epitomise the very best 'Wild' stories: long adventurous trips taking place in incredible natural environments.



There are some surprises too; I am gobsmacked that the 'Packbed' – a rucksack that turns into a sleeping stretcher and one-person tent – never took off, aside from being the size of a small car (and probably weighing as much), it looks extremely comfortable and the short legs would keep you out of the water in the event of biblical floods (something we have experienced this year).

For an individual, turning 30 is like the gateway from youth to not-so-young, but for a magazine, clocking up 30 years transforms it to a venerable institution – the lives of most magazines are short and fleeting. But, perhaps part of the reason why Wild has thrived for so long can be found in that first issue in Chris Baxter's editorial. In it, he outlines all the things that Wild will be: a celebration of our wild places; an independent, authoritative publication; supportive in the battle to preserve our natural environment; produced with crisp, clear and concise content; and delivered on time. On each of these counts I think Wild has succeeded throughout its 30-year history, which is really a remarkable achievement.

During this last year I have received many emails from people reflecting on 30 years of Wild. It has been fascinating to hear their stories and different perspectives on what the magazine means to them, particularly owners of every issue, who are a passionate and devoted bunch. I even received an email from the woman who typeset the very first Wild, she still has fond memories of Chris taking her out for Thai food by way of a thank you for her help.

A loyal and engaged readership has always been one of Wild's greatest strengths. Wildfire, our letters page, and one of Wild's original departments, is still going strongly – a testament to the long-running conversation Wild has had with its readers. Sometimes this conversation is critical, sometimes it is positive, but it is always engaged.

Throughout the years a lot of people have worked on Wild, and all of them too

have put huge amounts of energy into the magazine, right from the founders of the magazine – Chris Baxter, Brian Walters and Michael Collie – Wild has always been a magazine driven by those with a passion for the outdoors. There have been too many people involved to mention in this short editorial, but even in my brief time with Wild I have been struck by my colleagues' commitment to excellence. So, it seems right to thank all those people who have been involved through Wild's long journey.

In putting together this particular issue of Wild, one message has been reiterated to me over and over again: that Wild's power and importance is that it helps connect people to the natural environment. Without this connection to our wild places, people cannot place a value on them, nor will they feel any need to protect them from the threats that they face. And, the best way to connect to wild places is to be struck and inspired by their beauty. Hopefully Wild continues to do this.

So what does the next 30 years hold? The future is ever an elusive thing, but all magazines will have to embrace the digital age – and Wild is doing that through its website and social media. In some ways this transition is a scary and uncertain time for the publishing industry, but it is also incredibly exciting because the internet offers so much more potential for innovation and conversation with our readers. Ultimately though, digital media is simply a different lens to view what is really at the core of Wild – the celebration of wild places and our relationship to them, and whatever the future, this central tenant will always remain true.

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Wild Searchable Index

Wild readers will be pleased to hear that the Wild Searchable Index is now back online. If you go to wild.com.au, you will see a yellow bar on the right-hand side of the page, click on this and voilà!

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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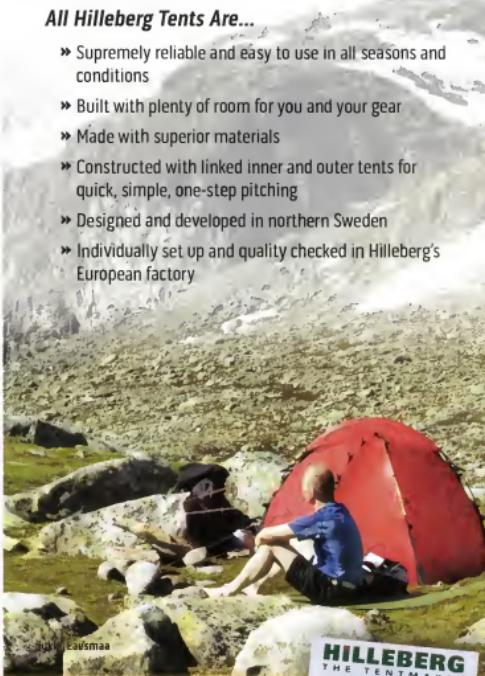
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Issue 125, September–October 2011

30 YEARS OF WILD

I am one of the people who has the full collection of *Wild* magazines – I'm sure there are many who can make this claim, but the reason for my full collection may be interesting to you.

Early in 1981 I accompanied my then boyfriend to Mt Arapiles for my first serious rockclimbing trip. These were the good ol' days of camping beside your car in the Pines, sitting on the bonnet to belay at the base of the cliff, etc! There were very few people camped in the Pines. There were no females apart from myself. I recall cringing around the camp fire, hoping the rock gurus wouldn't ask what climbs we'd done that day as they were all busy putting up climbs more than twice the grades we were throwing ourselves at.

In 1981, I had a serious fear of heights. Even now, after 30 years of climbing and instructing, I have only learnt to control the fear but not conquer it. After a night of continual nightmares about falling off cliffs, I spoke to Chris Baxter about how I didn't think I could continue with this sport and instead should perhaps take up speed knitting or crocheting tea cosies. Instead of directing me to the nearest wool shop, Chris suggested that I forget about the grades and just enjoy being out there in that fabulous Arapiles environment. He also talked about his new venture, a magazine called 'Wild'. His words were so encouraging that I promised to buy *Wild* when it appeared on the shelves – and I have kept that promise ever since!

My two children now pour over *Wild* when it appears in the mail, and want to complete just about every bushwalk that is written up in the magazine (surely not normal behaviour for 18 and 15-year-olds?). They have also enjoyed time spent on that wonderful Arapiles rock.

Best wishes for the next 30 years.

Dinny Kube
Heyfield, Vic

I am replying to your request to hear from any readers who have every *Wild*. In 1981 I was in my final year of my Physical Education

Degree, I came across a scrappy little note on the notice board at college that basically said Chris [Baxter] and others were starting up this mag and needed support, and that if you were interested in the outdoors you should subscribe to help get the project off the ground and you would be sent a mag soon. I didn't have any money at the time, but I thought it was worth supporting as there was really nothing out there for people like myself who were interested in having adventures outdoors! I continued to subscribe and I think I must have maintained my subscription even while doing lots of travel overseas, as I have every copy. I keep them in the green folders in my office for my students to reference (as well as requiring the library to also subscribe). It turns out that I ended up in a career in the outdoors and have been lecturing in outdoor education and outdoor recreation, training future teachers and leaders for the past 24 years (probably over 600 students by now). I have chosen to remain active in the field and I am out on trips with students throughout the uni year. I have three children and a husband who all enjoy their different outdoor adventures and in fact my eldest boy has just finished school and is keen to work in the outdoor field.

Happy 30th anniversary!

Sandy Allen-Craig
Hampton, Vic

WILDERNESS DEVELOPMENT BY STEALTH?

The delight of environment groups over the 16 200 hectare Green Gully addition to the Macleay Gorges Wilderness turned to dismay when it was discovered months later that it had been opened up to commercial development. In 2010 the then Environment Minister, Frank Sartor, had ruled out an Office of Environment and Heritage plan to use the old huts in the area as a base for helicopter tourism and instead directed that the wilderness be declared without any holes cut in it for such noisy commercial tourism.

But, before Green Gully was protected under the *Wilderness Act* 1987 and any without public consultation, the Office of Environment and Heritage refurbished three huts adding cooking facilities and sleeping quarters. New outdoor picnic tables, paved areas and fire places were built for the paying guests and utensils and crockery provided. Extensive signage was also installed along the 'Green Gully Track', contrary to *Wilderness Policy*.

Imagine our shock then to read the 'Gorge Raiders' article (how aptly named) in *Wild* no 124, which does not mention that the area is reserved as wilderness. The new facilities are not only contrary to the self-reliant recreation management principles of the *Wilderness Act*, but by encouraging paying

guests not to carry tents and cooking utensils on a wilderness walk with long days between huts, the park bosses are also ignoring essential bush safety practices. Any accident will drive home this lack of professionalism and scrutiny of the development in the worst way imaginable.

The Green Gully property was purchased with the help of a public fundraising campaign that raised over \$170 000. It was the largest acquisition made by the Dunphy Wilderness Fund, established by former Premier, Bob Carr, to commemorate the conservation achievements of Milo Dunphy.

Wilderness management can't sink lower than this development. It dishonours the memory of Milo and the donors to the Wilderness Fund and also actively promotes public confusion over wilderness management principles.

This is the first wilderness development in NSW enabled by the passage of the *National Parks and Wildlife (Visitors and Tourists) Act 2010*, which was vigorously opposed by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. We must now all join together to close the floodgates to commercialisation of our National Parks and Wilderness areas that have been opened by this legislation.

Keith Muir
Newtown, NSW

A STINK SOLUTION?

So many of the thermals reviewed in *Wild* no 125 mentioned the problem of 'wonky Warwicks', the stench from the armpits. There is a simple solution to managing the smell. This comes from a letter to the *New Scientist*, responding to an article on the research into more effective antiperspirants and deodorants. The writer simply recommends splashing a bit of meths in the armpits. And very shortly, the only smells emanating are just yourself. No roll-ons, no sticks and no sprays, just splash the humble fuel of Trangias!

The logic is very simple, the problem smells are produced by bacteria fermenting the sweat. Kill the bacteria with meths and sweater pheromones will start to prevail. Part of the regime might be to douse the garment armpits, if it has a history of stinking.

Just pack a little more fuel for the Trangia, and you'll smell, well, yourself, for the trip. The gas cooker people will have to just stink!

PB
Coonabarabran, NSW

Reader's letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to *Wild*, 11–15 Buckhurst St, South Melbourne, Vic 3025 or email ross.taylor@primecreative.com.au

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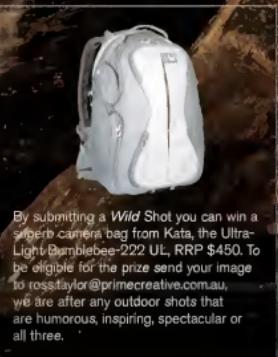
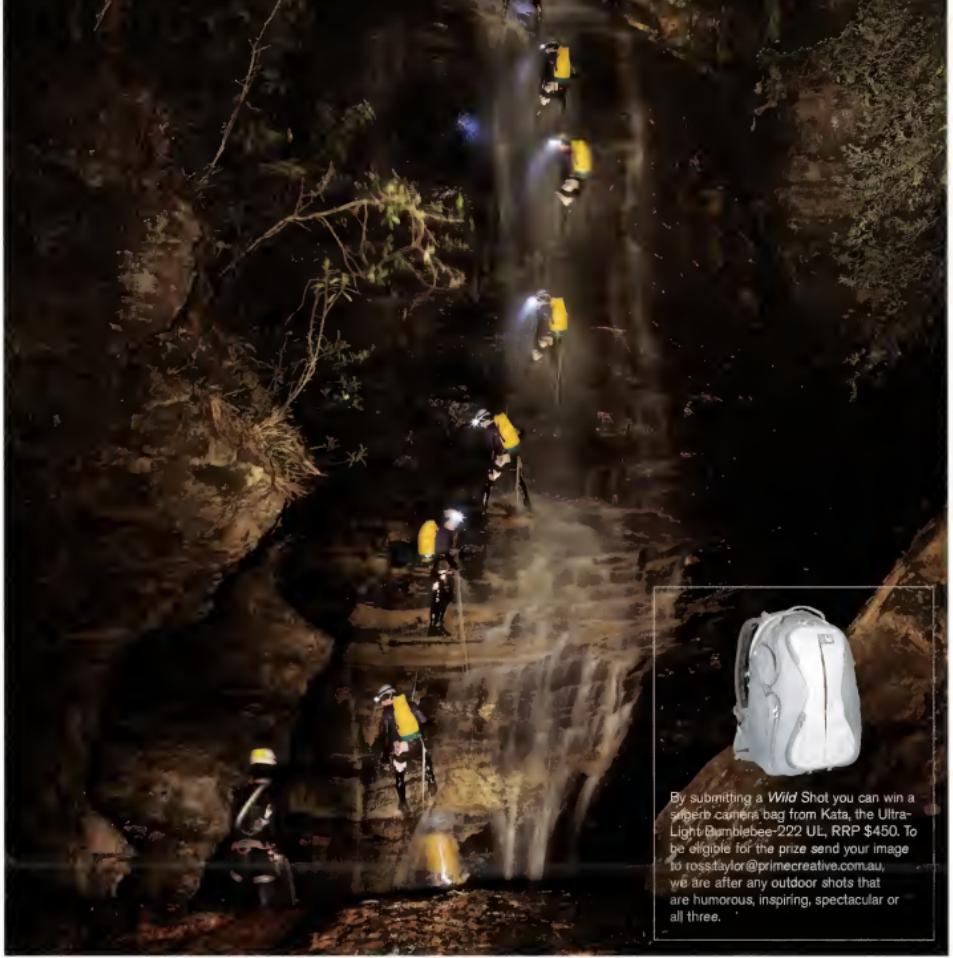
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A Night Adventure*

Photographer David Burgess writes:

This is a shot (well, it was about 23 pieced together) I took of Max Heavenrich Vassilos rappelling down Empress Falls in the Blue Mountains on a warm moonless night last summer - I think it sums up an awesome night's adventure perfectly.



By submitting a Wild Shot you can win a superb camera bag from Kata, the Ultra-Light Bumblebee 222 UL, RRP \$450. To be eligible for the prize send your image to ross.taylor@primecreative.com.au, we are after any outdoor shots that are humorous, inspiring, spectacular or all three.

To the South Pole and Back

WALKING TO THE SOUTH POLE and back unsupported has never been done before, but as we go to print two young Australians, James Castrission and Justin Jones, are setting off on an attempt to achieve this remarkable feat. We talk to James to find out a little more about their adventure

Who's attempted this trip before you?

In the last ten or so years there's been about five teams who have tried it, most of the teams have made it there but not back. Eric Philips, Jon Muir and Peter Hillary tried to go from the Australian side in 1998. There was a Kiwi team, Kevin Biggar and Jamie FitzGerald, who attempted it in 2007, they were actually planning on walking to the Pole and kiting back. A UK bloke, Chris Foot, also attempted it solo last year.

What's the main reason people haven't made it back?

There are a whole lot of different reasons. Fortunately, Jonesy and I have been able to work with each team, especially Eric Philips, to get a strategy that we think should see us get there and back. Some teams just started out too heavy and were too slow. Last year Chris Foot didn't start until late in the season, he was hoping that warmer weather would mean he had to carry less gear, but it didn't leave him time for the return trip. On other trips they've had really bad team dynamics. In an extreme environment team dynamics can play a massive role, it seems like a petty thing when you think about it here, but when you're exhausted and pushing yourself to the limits everything the other bloke does can annoy you.

What are the things that you have done to try and ensure success?

There are a few things. One, we are going down there extremely early. In a way it's a bit of a bold strategy – it is the earliest any man-hauling expedition will have started. It's going to be brutally cold in the first couple of weeks, when our sleds are going to be the heaviest. So if we can push through those weeks we will set



ourselves up quite well.

In terms of gear modification and adjustments, we've learnt heaps from the other teams. Kevin and Jamie were planning on kiting back, but when you're kiting you put your gear through so much strain because your sled's bouncing around that you need heavier gear on the sled – their sleds were ten kilograms heavier than ours will be. We've tried to go as light as possible, but at the same time have the redundancies in place so that if things do break we have a back up.

It is quite a different adventure from your last one, what have you done training wise?

It is different, but there are also an uncanny amount of similarities. In a straight line it's exactly the same distance, 2200 kilometres. I mean day in, day out, with all these big trips it's so much about the maintenance of yourself, your systems and equipment, and also the monotony of being on the trail day after day, and paddling the Tasman couldn't have trained

us up any better for that.

We also headed up to the Arctic in February and spent a month training in temperatures down to -44°C, that was awesome for testing our gear and finding out what worked. The best training for an expedition like this is pulling cold things in cold place, so we've tried to replicate that as much as possible. We recently headed across to the Tasman Glacier in New Zealand to test out our gear modifications and just see how it all went, and we're really happy with what we've come up with. We are also training 25 to 30 hours a week here in Sydney, pulling tyres, doing weights and lots of cardio work. We've both bulked up a lot, I've put on 16 kilograms this year for the trip, which we're expecting to lose while we are out there.

Are you enjoying that part?

Jonesy's got a name amongst our mates as 'Pie Guts', just eating what he eats in a normal day helped me to put on the weight!

Do you think the trip is more of a mental or physical challenge?

I think they're very closely interlinked. Physically we're going to be burning more calories than we did on the Tasman, just from the cold and brutality of pulling a sled, but at the same time just mentally getting on the trail, pushing through day after day, I don't think one is going to more difficult than the other actually.

Are you nervous?

I think it is only natural to be nervous. That's one of the great things about doing expeditions, you have so much emotion running through you: at times you're nervous, at times you're excited, you've got all this anticipation building, at other times you just want to be out there, but there's definitely a bit of nervousness right now. It helps keep you sharp.



Justin Jones and James Castrission training in the Arctic. **Top**, James Castrission kitted up for the cold. Images courtesy of Cas and Jonesy

Cas and Jonesy will be making regular updates during their expedition, you can follow their journey at casandjonesy.com.au

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Tarkine wilderness, photo by Kraig Carlstrom

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A New Frontier



Dr David Stratton and helpers trying out the new Trail Rider wheelchair in the Grampians National Park. Thomas Parkes

AN ALL-TERRAIN WHEELCHAIR recently bought by Parks Victoria promises to open up new areas of the bush for the disabled.

In 2009, Dr David Stratton, a retired university professor and multiple sclerosis sufferer, was in Vancouver when a friend mentioned the Trail Rider all-terrain wheelchair to him. Invented by the former mayor of Vancouver and quadriplegic, Sam Sullivan, the Trail Rider allows disabled people, with the assistance of a few helpers, to access areas that they would normally be unable to visit. A long-time walker, Dr Stratton had been forced to give up serious bushwalking ten years earlier due to his deteriorating ability to

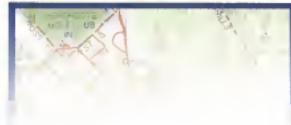
walk. The chair was a revelation. "To be able to reconnect with nature and the place and activities I love brought tears to my eyes," he says.

On Dr Stratton's return to Australia he immediately got in contact with the Ranger in Charge of the Grampians, David Roberts. Roberts was excited by the idea of the wheelchair and lobbied for Parks to acquire one. He was successful, and as part of its 'Healthy Parks Healthy People' initiative, Parks Victoria bought one of the \$7000 chairs, which it is currently trialling in the Grampians, as well as purchasing a beach model that is currently being used at Cape Conran Coastal Park.

Dr Stratton was the first test pilot of the new wheelchair and has even been to the rugged summit of Boronia Peak in the Grampians, although he says this was probably the upper limit of what is possible to access in the chair. He encourages people to try out the new wheelchair. "All you need is a few helpers, possibly young volunteers to assist with guiding the chair over trails."

Elsewhere in the world, the chair has been used by people to reach the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro and the Mt Everest Basecamp. Dr Stratton's dream is to see the Trail Rider used in Tasmania.

The Trail Rider is free to use. To find out more contact Megan Calabro on (03) 5361 4008. The chair requires a minimum of two operators. Four operators are recommended for long tracks or walks with significant gradients. The passenger of the Trail Rider chair must provide their own bike helmet and wear it when using the chair.



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Kimberley Ultramarathon Strikes Trouble

On 4 September, four endurance racers were badly burnt after being trapped by fire and having to jump through a wall of flames while competing in the 100-kilometre Kimberley Ultramarathon. Four competitors, two women and two men, were treated for severe burns after the race, which was being held on the El Questro Wilderness Estate near Kununurra in Western Australia.

The two men, Michael Hull and fellow competitor, Martin Van Der Merwe, both received third degree burns to ten to 20 per cent of their bodies, but have since been released from hospital.

The two female competitors, Kate Sanderson and Turia Pitt, were less fortunate and received far more severe third degree burns to between 80 to 90 per cent of their bodies. Both are still in hospital, but are now categorised as being in a serious but stable condition.

Race organiser, RacingThePlanet, is working with the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia, an arson unit and police to gather information for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

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SCROGGIN

Larapinta Trail Reopens After Fire Damage

Despite initial reports on the Wild Facebook page that the Larapinta Trail had been destroyed by recent bushfires, these reports have turned out to be somewhat catastrophising. Section one to six (Alice Springs to Ellery Creek) were briefly closed because of the danger to bushwalkers, but the track has since been reopened. According to the local ranger, sections one and two suffered the worst fire damage, however the areas most affected were mainly on adjoining private property. Parks and Wildlife Service warn that some markers could have been burnt and that people should take extra care navigating along the track.

Teenager rescued near Mt Erica

On Saturday 6 June 2011, Bush Search and Rescue Victoria (BSAR) was called to assist police in the search for a 13-year-old girl, Ashley Kerstjens, who went missing during a Scout trip close to Mushroom Rocks near Mt Erica, east of Melbourne.

Eighteen BSAR searchers participated in the search, joining Police and the SES. Searching commenced in the dark at 1.30am on Sunday in the vicinity of Mushroom Rocks and surrounding creeks and ridges.

The terrain around Mushroom Rocks is a thick snow gum forest with dense undergrowth between large granite boulders. Many search routes along creeks and through the bush nearby were almost impenetrable.

Four cross-country skiers from Boroondara Bushwalkers happened to be camped near Mt Erica (and who were also BSAR members), joined the search and found footprints in patchy snow on the slopes below Mt Erica. They followed this footprint trail throughout the day to a

saddle west of Talbot Peak and were joined by several other BSAR groups later in the afternoon.

After further searching, Ashley was heard calling out by a BSAR search group and located nearby. She was evacuated immediately by the police helicopter and taken to hospital. It was fortunate that she was saved from a life-threatening second night out in very cold conditions. She has since made a full recovery.

Bush Search and Rescue is comprised of 280 volunteer Victorian bushwalkers and outdoor enthusiasts.

More information on the Mt Erica search and joining Bush Search and Rescue can be found at www.bsar.org.

Peter Campbell, BSAR Convenor

Pole to Pole Run Update

For those wondering, Pat Farmer is still

slogging away on his epic Pole to Pole Run. In mid-September he finished the 11 774-kilometre second section of the run down the East Cost of the United States, which means that he has now passed the halfway point. All that remains is to run 9693 kilometres through South America, followed by a 900 kilometre ice trek across Antarctica to the South Pole.

When he does reach Antarctica he will need to stack on some weight to combat the freezing temperatures; his weight during the run has dropped as low as 51 kilograms, forcing him to concentrate on eating more, with his weight now sitting at a healthier 58 kilograms.

To keep on schedule Farmer is not taking any rest days and is running the equivalent of two marathons a day.

To keep track of his progress in real time visit poletopolerun.com



Pat Farmer ticking through the kilometres on his Pole to Pole Run. Courtesy Pole to Pole

November
Kathmandu Adventure Series **M**
5 November, Vic
maxadventure.com.au

King Island Ultra **BR**
5 November, Tas
coolrunning.com.au

Anaconda Adventure Series **M**
6 November, Old
rapidascent.com.au

Anaconda Adventure Series **M**
6 November, WA
rapidascent.com.au

Great North Walk **BR**
12 November, NSW
coolrunning.com.au

Kathmandu Max 12/24 **M**
12–13 November, NSW
maxadventure.com.au

Tasmanian Championships **R**
12–13 November, Tas
rogaine.asn.au

Deep Space Mountain Marathon **BR**
13 November, ACT
coolrunning.com.au

Canoe Plus Slalom **20**
20 November, Vic
canoe.org.au

6 hr **R**
20 November, Vic
vra.rogaine.asn.au

Socialgaine 6 hr **R**
20 November, NSW
rogaine.asn.au

Victorian Slalom Championships **D**
26–27 November, Vic
canoe.org.au

December
Razorback Run **BR**
3 December, Vic
runningwild.net.au

Anaconda Adventure Race **M**
4 December, Vic
rapidascent.com.au

Coast to Kosciuszko **BR**
9 December, NSW
coolrunning.com.au

Six Inch Trail **BR**
18 December, WA
coolrunning.com.au

January
Two Bays Trail Run **BR**
15 January, Vic
coolrunning.com.au

February
Kathmandu Adventure Sprint **M**
4–5 February, NSW
maxadventure.com.au

March
Tough Bloke Challenge **BR**
3–4 March, Vic
coolrunning.com.au

Kathmandu Adventure Sprint **M**
17 March, Old
maxadventure.com.au

6 hr x2 **R**
31 March–1 April, Vic
vra.rogaine.asn.au

May
WildEndurance **BR**
5–6 May, Vic
coolrunning.com.au

Kathmandu Adventure Sprint **M**
26–27 May, NSW
maxadventure.com.au

Activities:
BR bush running,
M multisports, P paddling
O orienteering, R rogaining
C canoeing

Rogaining events are organised by the State rogaining associations. Canoeing events are organised by the State canoeing associations unless otherwise stated

Wild Diary listings provide information about wilderness events.

Send items for publication to ross.taylor@primecreative.com.au

Wild Diary



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The Dragonfly *Hemicordulia tau*

One of nature's most interesting transformations is the aquatic 'mudeye' that turns into an aerial dragonfly. Both life stages are carnivorous: the larva has an extensible lower jaw that it can shoot out to capture other aquatic invertebrates; the adult has its legs directed forwards as it flies, forming a spiny basket used to catch and eat flying insects while still on the wing.

These amazing flying machines have two pairs of wings. If you could slow down a dragonfly's wingbeats to see how they synchronise you would see various types of flight. When they are hovering or flying very slowly the forewings move up as the hindwings move down, 180° out of phase, as this provides a lot of lift. For normal flying, when thrust is more important than lift, the hindwings cycle about 90° before the forewings. To change direction quickly requires maximum thrust, which is best achieved if the two pairs of wings move in unison. Dragonflies occasionally glide with no wingbeats, slowly descending or taking advantage of small thermal updrafts. To do all this the flight muscles can adjust stroke-frequency, amplitude, phase between forewings and hindwings, and the angle of attack independently for each of the four wings.

Dragonflies on the wing seem to fall into two categories: perchers and patrollers. Perchers spend most of their time roosting with occasional sallies to chase another male, to catch food or to pursue a female. Patrollers have a beat which they fly up and down, also feeding, fighting or intercepting females, but rarely coming to land.

Insects do not have an internal means of temperature control like birds and mammals; their body temperature stays fairly close to ambient. Flying is a particularly energy-demanding activity and the large muscles in the thorax need to achieve a threshold temperature before a dragonfly can get airborne. Some species achieve this by wing-whirring before take-off, while others have to choose an advantageous position in the morning sun before they can start their day's flying. At the other end of the scale, overheating can cause difficulties for a dragonfly. Patrollers particularly, with the constant flexing of their flight muscles, generate lots of heat in the thorax. They have a circulation system that shunts the heat to the abdomen, which has a large surface area and thus radiates the excess away. Perchers have other mechanisms; some just seek a shady spot, while others adopt a position, known as the 'obelisk' where they point their abdomen directly towards the sun. This minimises the surface area of the dragonfly exposed to the sun's radiant heat, keeping it from overheating. In the early morning, when the percher is still cold, sun-traps are a valuable resource.

Male dragonflies have a number of reasons to be territorial, some to do with their immediate welfare, such as the best basking spot, but mostly it is to do with ensuring that their genes pass on to future generations. Females come to the water to find a mate and then lay their eggs. They usually build up their fat resources by hunting prey away from the water and harassment by males. Males spend more time by the water, seeking food, waiting for females and often guarding the best site for oviposition. Successful suitors will take the female to his chosen oviposition site and guard her from other males while she lays the batch of eggs he has fertilised.



Photographer Michele Kohout writes: 'It was astounding how soon after creating a garden pond that it became colonised by invertebrates and a little aquatic ecosystem formed. These dragonflies emerged at Christmas time, and I sat for hours watching their jewelled forms dry and prepare for flight. About 20 of them hatched over a couple of days.'

There are over 5000 species of dragonflies in the world and well over 300 in Australia. As with many other animal and plant groups, Australia has a dragonfly fauna that has a mixture of Gondwanan elements and of species that have arrived from the north. There are now guides available that allow the identification of all Australian species, but it can require a fresh specimen under the microscope at times. Whatever their scientific name might be, dragonflies provide a wealth of opportunities for observing and interpreting unusual behaviours. Take a pair of close-focus binoculars down to your local wetland and you will soon see what I mean.

Ian Endersby

To submit a photo for All Things Great and Small please contact the editor: ross.taylor@primecreative.com.au. We will accept photos of plants or animals and pay at our standard rate. Published photos will be accompanied by some history that we will source.

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Wild Environmentalist of the Year: Matthew Wright

WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that the 2010 Wild Environmentalist of the Year is Matthew Wright, the Chief Executive Officer of Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE). Matthew has been given the award for his work promoting a shift away from carbon intensive power generation to clean, renewable energy. Matthew, along with Adrian Whitehead, is one of the founders of the not-for-profit BZE, which is a climate change solutions think tank.

Foremost among BZE's achievements has been releasing the Zero Carbon Australia

Stationary Energy Plan (SEP), a document that maps out in detail the transition and cost of moving to using 100 per cent renewable energy to power Australia within the next ten years. The SEP was put together using pro-bono contributions by engineers and scientists and was formulated using already existing technologies. The plan estimates that it would require around \$37 billion a year in private and public investment for the next ten years to move to clean energy – a cost they estimate as adding \$8 a week to the average power bill.

The SEP utilises a mixture of different renewable energy resources including solar energy and wind power, but the cornerstone of the plan is provided by solar thermal plants, which is also known as Concentrated Solar Power. Concentrated Solar Power involves focusing massive banks of mirrors on to a single point to heat molten salt, which can then be used to store energy for long periods of time (and power steam turbines), solving the long-held criticism that renewable energy sources can't provide base load power.

The award has been a long time coming this year as we decided to hold off announcing the winner until the 30th anniversary issue. Awarding the Wild Environmentalist of the Year to Matthew is a bit of a departure for us as the award has generally gone to wilderness campaigners, but as Wild founder Brian Walters puts it, 'the environment is bigger than wilderness.' Matthew wins the award, which also comes with a \$1000 prize.

You can read more about Matthew and Beyond Zero Emissions at beyondzeroemissions.org

Left, Ross Garnaut, 2010 Wild Environmentalist of the Year Matthew Wright and Tony Windsor. Beyond Zero Emissions



35 Years of the Wilderness Society

Wild is not the only organisation celebrating a significant milestone.

Lyndon Schneiders reports

TIME IN THE BUSH PROVIDES AN opportunity to reflect on the great people who fought for the protection of our wild places. Behind every national park and World Heritage Area is a story of courage and commitment—a story of ordinary Australians who said 'yes' to nature.

One of my favourite places on earth is Fraser Island. The walk that runs up the spine of the island showcases the incredible beauty of this World Heritage-listed wonder. Sure, there are scars from a century of logging and mining, but these scars are now healing thanks to the people who made changes for the better.

Further north is Queensland's World Heritage-listed Hinchinbrook Island.

Anyone lucky enough to have visited the area will agree that the island's Thorsborne Trail is 32 kilometres of sheer tropical paradise. There was a time when the wilderness values of this area were not apparent to everyone and there was interest in developing Port Hinchinbrook. A Senate enquiry in 1999 found that the development posed a serious threat to the island's world-class environmental values and as a result, the wilderness code of management was not watered down. If it hadn't been for the efforts of concerned citizens, the outcome would have been quite different.

Today a storm is brewing in the Kimberley, with the epicentre at James Price Point—the proposed site for Australia's largest industrial development. Running through the middle of this

contested piece of country is an incredible seven-day walk called the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail: once a year, traditional owners guide visitors along the track and explain dreaming stories associated with the ancient landscape. But, the longevity of this remarkable walk, as well as Indigenous cultural heritage, precious bilby habitat and humpback whale calving grounds is now in question as plans to build a giant gas hub at James Price Point are underway.

Next time you're out enjoying one of our gorgeous national parks, take a moment to think about how it came to be. Chances are, a mob of nature-lovers just like you put in years of hard work to make sure it was protected for future generations.

Visit wilderness.org.au to find out how you can help protect the bushwalks of the future.

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A Tasmanian Forest Solution is Within Reach

PHILL PULLINGER REPORTS: With the signing of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement by the Commonwealth and State governments, we now have the best chance in decades to see the protection of more than half a million hectares of Tasmania's ancient forests.

These forests encompass an extraordinary diversity: from the world's tallest hardwood forests along the borders of the Southwest Wilderness World Heritage Area in the Styx, Upper Florentine and Weld Valleys (with individual trees stretching up to 100 metres in height) to Australia's largest tract of temperate rainforest – the Tarkine – on Tasmania's West Coast.

After decades of conflict over logging in Tasmania's native forests, shifts in consumer awareness and changes in the market place have opened up big opportunities for genuine change: Japanese paper companies are choosing not to purchase timber sourced from high conservation value forests (as of 2009) and Gunns (the largest native forests logging company in Australia) is permanently exiting all native forests logging and becoming a plantation-only company.

The war over forests is crippling a divided Tasmanian community, leading to a series of talks in 2010 aimed at putting past differences aside and finding a resolution. Those talks, with a 'Statement of Principles' signed in October 2010 by environment groups, unions and timber industry bodies, were followed by further facilitation from former union leader, Bill Kelty, who was charged with facilitating the discussions

over the past six months and culminated in the signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

This is a groundbreaking opportunity to deliver a landmark nature conservation outcome although, with fears over job security within the timber industry, many challenges still remain.

Learn more about the agreement and the forests affected at et.org.au



The Florentine Valley from the air. Top, and one of the Florentine's ancient old-growth trees.
Both photos by Rob Blakers



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WILDERNESSWEAR AUSTRALIA

Arkaroola to be Protected

PETER OWEN REPORTS: For more than 40 years – long before it became fashionable – the Sprigg family have worked to protect the unique values of Arkaroola, 600 kilometres north of Adelaide in the Flinders Ranges. Home to numerous rare species and stunning geological features, the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary has become a drawcard for tourists from across Australia and the world.

Recognised internationally for its geological significance, Arkaroola's mountains are listed on the Register of the National Estate. Its archaeological significance continues to grow with the recent discovery of the oldest fossilised reef ever found.

Scientists have also just discovered a new species of desert frog, adding to the area's rich biodiversity known to include 160 species of birds, the endangered yellow-footed rock-wallaby and lizards, giant geckos and molluscs found nowhere else on earth. Despite this, mining has been allowed in these iconic mountains.

On 22 July 2011, South Australian Premier, Mike Rann, announced that all mining activities are to be banned within the Arkaroola Mountains. The Government is now developing special legislation to prohibit mining, mineral exploration and grazing. It is also proposing to nominate the area for the National and World Heritage lists.

While the details of legislation are yet to be finalised and any National and World Heritage listing is some time away, the Wilderness Society congratulates the South Australian Government for showing vision and initiating the process of protecting Arkaroola forever.



Arkaroola protesters in Adelaide. Matt Turner. Top, the beautiful Arkaroola. Bill Doyle

WOODCHIPS

Private Enterprise in Victoria's National Parks

State Environment Minister, Ryan Smith, has said in an interview with *The Age* that he isn't interested in opening up national parks to more enterprise. "I'm not about to encroach on what is an absolutely fantastic range of natural assets that Victoria has," he said. "People can enjoy them for what they are. I want to see our natural assets developed—but that doesn't mean 'developments'. It just means appropriate access to tracks, toilet blocks, amenities, that sort of thing."

This suggests that private developments in Victorian national parks will probably be ruled out in the immediate future. As more people become interested in enjoying Australia's wild places, the topic of development in national parks becomes more complex as park managers struggle to cater for visitors of varying outdoor experience levels.

Ningaloo Coast UNESCO World Heritage listed

Whale sharks and sea turtles won't be the only species to benefit from the

listing. The Ningaloo Coast – most famous for its visiting whale sharks – comprises of not only one of the longest near-shore reefs in the world, but it also holds an extensive karst system, a network of underground caves, streams and shallow waters. Its beaches are major nesting grounds for loggerhead turtles and development on such beaches have been a major conservation issue at the start of the century. Hopefully this special place has now been given the protection it needs.

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Grit by Sea

Quentin Chester reflects on 30 years of Wild



'The point is the magazines are more than fusty artefacts. They carry the pulse of the physical world and people getting stuck into it. For some of us our houses come and go. To us a good address is less about bricks and mortar and more to do with the natural spaces – known and envisaged – we love to mess about in. Forget picket fences and garden beds. Just give me maps, photos, a guidebook or two and a stack of Wilds. That's home enough for me.'

It's a little after seven on a clear June morning in Victoria's extreme east. I'm walking on sand, heading towards a rising sun. As far as any eye can see there's a slow curve of beach and waves tumbling to shore in foamy crests. A westerly breeze is on my shoulder jollying me into a long stride. To be here and to be strrolling with the open sky and backlit surf feels fresh and new. Yet, somehow, it's uncannily familiar too.

Adding another edge to the morning mood is the fact that this coast keeps going; it keeps running wild. You could walk another two or three days before spotting a car or street light. And behind me, west of Mallacoota, it's the same story. Then, to top it off, there's the bonus of being able slip along this raggedy southern shore on one of those priceless winter days when all is bright and warm.

If you luck upon a beach that's smooth and firm underfoot, coast walking is hard to beat. With no obstacles to stumble over, you don't have to worry about where to put your boots. And, navigation is a breeze. On this stretch of Croajingolong, as long as I keep my starboard shoulder pointing out to sea and the distant white tower of Gabo Island's lighthouse, I can't go wrong.

This simplicity is often matched by the pared-back surrounds. Here, aside from a bit of patterning in the sand and a front dune dressed in beach spinifex, there's little else to distract from the ocean's expanses. It doesn't take long for the rhythms of the waves and my rolling gait to loosen inhibitions. So, just when I'm idly imagining 'this is as good as it gets', my thoughts are off the leash and rounding up other coastal episodes. They appear from all over: from Lucky Bay near Esperance and the Whitsundays to Eyre Peninsula's west coast, Yirrkala in Arnhem Land and Bass Strait's Three Hummock Island.

These recollections even come with their own map, a thing called *Australia for Adventurers and Dreamers*, first published by Australian Geographic in 1990. As things have played out this has been one of the few constants in my 'working' life. Now faded, torn and taped, the map has always been a loitering presence on the wall above my various home office desks. As somebody with both feet planted aimlessly in the dreamer camp, the map's myriad details are both a refuge and resource. In those deskbound hours when finding new ways not to write stories I often find myself idly tracking along its worn creases and most

of all, that endless, crinkly loop of coast.

Given our restless path – my wife and I are about to move house for the 14th time – an occasional constant is a welcome sight. Over the years this particular map, or at least the idea of it, has become so buried in my psyche that it's always with me. Even when I'm ambling along a beach a thousand kilometres away with frothy waves licking at my boots.

I'm not exactly sure where I first saw mention of Croajingolong, but I'd lay odds it was in *Wild*. Once I rolled those long vowels around in my head a few times I knew I had to go there. It's that kind of word. I certainly remember a *Wild* story with pics of happy campers walking the coast and feeling a twinge or two of longing. I wanted to be there with them that instant, transported to the breezy headlands and those loping stretches of buff-coloured sand. Anything to save me from another hour staring at a blinking cursor on a vacant screen.

As it happens, *Wild* has been the other big mainstay in my fidgety excuse for a career. The experiment Chris Baxter and Mike Collie crafted all those years ago has become quite a journey. Issue upon issue, the magazine has grown into an imperishable source of memories and incitement. Being lost in the daily jumble it's easy to forget that *Wild* has been peddling its tales for a generation. Until, that is, you move house. In which case a *Wild* collection, having grown into a paper mountain, looms as a back-bursting reminder of how 30 years stacks up.

The point is that the magazines are more than fusty artefacts. They carry the pulse of the physical world and people getting stuck into it. For some of us our houses come and go. To us a good address is less about bricks and mortar and more to do with the natural spaces – known and envisaged – we love to mess about in. Forget picket fences and garden beds. Just give me maps, photos, a guidebook or two and a stack of *Wilds*. That's home enough for me.

In this virtual abode there's always scope for extending and renovating. New trips get tacked on to wish lists. Old sites are revisited. *Wild's* cunning ploy for immortality is that much of its focus is on timeless places and protected landscapes. Whether well-known or newly 'revealed', the essence of the encounter they offer is unchanging. As a result, past issues are not dead weights, but time bombs. The old



Looking towards Lake Baracoota and Howe Hill in Croajingolong National Park. Quentin Chester

stories serve as prods for journeys new and dreams on hold.

My Croajingolong fantasy has been lurking in a to-do file for a decade, maybe more. And now here I am tramping the sand. So much along this shore echoes the coasts of travels past: the glancing wintery light, a spiky backdrop of acacias and banksias, the ocean's emerald depths and that salty spritz on the breeze. However, a few strides later, there's a shell or strap of washed up weed that's altogether new to me. If I look up from the sand, that air of freshness blows much harder. It only takes a glimpse of Gabo Island or the timbered dunes rising to Howe Hill to stir the old 'I want to go there' impulse.

So this walk, like the pages of *Wild*, sets up a conversation between past and present; the known and the unknown. Step by step there's a sense of recognition. I feel like I belong here. At the same time it's new ground. Peering into the distance you realise that this conversation also includes a bit of banter about place and possibility. Whether you're gazing at a horizon or a magazine feature there's often a good chance a slice of your future is there somewhere.

Over *Wild*'s three-decade arc these connections add up to something greater than the sum of 126 issues. The last thing the magazine ever set out to do was to survey 'what it means to be Australian'. Nevertheless, the cumulative impact of so many stories is to build a prolific portrait of our bush places. Flick through a few dozen back issues and the diversity of exploits

from all over the country is truly remarkable.

While no précis can do that justice, the opportunity to toddle along ten kilometres of empty beach at dawn is not a bad teaser for what Australia offers and what *Wild*'s about. After a couple hours walking with beach memories, it's hard not to feel incorporated into a cohort of coast lovers and the idea that at this moment several thousand like-minded wanderers are starting their day on foot on the damp sand.

The beach endures as our ultimate democratic space. For many it's the place of first steps, holidays and a childhood unleashed. In many ways I did my best growing up on the coast. It was the place where I could be most alone. I learnt to fossick there and read the weather. At first it was learning to be comfortable within that openness of space and a rolling sea. Then I realised I couldn't live without it.

In a way the ocean's expanses equip us with a way to feel about the continent as a whole. So many of our landscapes extend beyond our individual capacity to fully explore or fathom. That goes for the coast as much as anywhere. I love the notion that I could keep on walking and never make it to the end of our beaches. Here, the freedom to explore seems inexhaustible, in a way it can never be living, say, somewhere like Wales or Belgium. If you can get an eyeful of infinity in a grain of sand, then our shores are bounty beyond measure.

With the sun now high over the Croajingolong coast I veer into the dunes, through the snagging scrub and over the

sharp spinifex crests. Eventually I wade down a bank into an enormous swale several hundred metres wide. Bare – save for the odd island of grass or marooned tree – this vast sand blow is golden bright and mesmerising and as daunting a void as any that the wind has carved on Fraser Island or the Coorong.

Ahead stretches the waters of Lake Baracoota and above it the ridges of Howe Hill cloaked in forest. I could spend a week here, but I've only got an hour or two. Then there's another familiar voice in my head: 'come back, have to come back, have to come back soon.'

From the outer rim of the swale I turn inland from the view of Gabo Island and I feel my boots slip and the slope takes me. Like a ten-year-old I plunge down the dune wall with warm sand flying off my heels like spray. By the time I make it to the lake edge I'm ready to slump on to the crescent beach, and gulp the air. Watte birds are gossiping among the banksias and a frog song that's new to me is echoing across the swampy ground behind the lake. Pretty soon I'm dreaming about camping where I sit, or the possibilities for kayaking across the lake, or walking around the edge to explore the opposite shore. Through the magic of time the whole place feels wonderfully exotic and just like home. **W**

A *Wild* contributor since issue no 3, **Quentin Chester** is a freelance journalist and the author of six books about wilderness places. Blog: quentinchester.blogspot.com

THE REALISTIC OPTIMIST

a chat with Geoff Mosley

The very first issue of *Wild* in 1981 featured an interview with legendary environmental campaigner and bushwalker, Geoff Mosley.

Ross Taylor speaks to him 30 years later

"Energy and persistence conquer all things."
— Benjamin Franklin.

When Geoff Mosley was interviewed in the first issue of *Wild*, he was a 50-year-old father of four, the Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and a keen bushwalker. Thirty years further along the arc of time, Geoff is now 80, a grandfather and working as a World Heritage consultant, maintenance gardener and teacher. But, some things remain unchanged; he is still a passionate, committed environmentalist and bushwalker.

On the morning I call, Geoff is recovering from a cold, his gravelly voice broken by bouts of coughing. Despite this, he sounds remarkably chipper, having spent the weekend walking with four of his grandchildren in the Royal National Park in NSW. Geoff talks enthusiastically about his latest granddaughter, 'Little Edith, 16-months old, was doing her first bushwalk and... [his voice rising with excitement] she was actually walking!' In his first *Wild* interview Geoff waxed lyrical about children and the bush. Clearly nothing has changed, except perhaps for his greater sense of his own mortality. 'It is absolutely wonderful being with kids on bushwalks, because they play. When you camp they play, just the same way we used to play when we were their age: going down to the beach, looking for shells, doing things in the water with sand. It's also rather sad in a way because it reminds you that that pleasure is something you can't get except vicariously through them.'

Geoff's own childhood had a profound influence on his love of the wild. 'I grew up in the Peak District, so where I lived was

alongside a dale. As kids we roamed around in the dales, built little huts, camped in caves – it was right on my back door.' One of Geoff's relatives was the head keeper for the Duke of Devonshire and Geoff used to work for him during the summer holidays, driving the grouse towards the shooters. 'We'd do one moor and then we'd do another, so it was an incredible amount of walking. Apart from that I was walking just for pure pleasure.'

Geoff's love of the outdoors grew from there. At Nottingham University (where he studied geography) he would take groups of friends walking on the moors or caving. While on one uni break, he and some mates caught a ride on a trawler to northern Norway where they did some walking and mountaineering, before two of them hitched all the way back to Paris.

By the time Geoff arrived in Australia in 1960 – via stints in Canada and New Zealand – he was an accomplished outdoorsman. Shortly after getting here he began what became a long career of

environmental activism. Arriving in Canberra to start his PhD at the Australian National University (ANU), he helped found the Canberra Bushwalking Club. The club had a very strong conservation focus and was closely involved with the formation of what would become the Namadgi National Park.

Geoff's studies had also been leading him in the direction of conservation. Back in the United Kingdom during his Master's, he had studied the Peak District National Park – Britain's first national park – and the effect it had on the landscape, while his PhD at ANU was on recreation and related land use in Tasmania. He finished his PhD in 1963 and did his Post Doctoral studies at Newcastle University, studying NSW's national parks system and wilderness conservation. In a case of 'right time, right place', NSW's then Minister for Lands, Tom Lewis, had previously worked in the US where he had been impressed with the American national parks system. Lewis decided to introduce Australia's first



comprehensive national parks and wildlife legislation, with Geoff becoming heavily involved in the development of a zoning plan for the Kosciuszko State Park. It was shortly after this, in 1968, that Geoff began working fulltime with the ACF as its Assistant Director.

Once at the ACF, whether on staff or as a councillor, Geoff worked on a huge number of environmental campaigns. When I ask him what he identifies as his major achievements he picks out just a few. "The World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains; the whales moratorium, which will hopefully become permanent; the Antarctica Madrid Protocol banning all mineral activity indefinitely; I've run five national Wilderness Conferences, promoting wilderness; we got World Heritage listing for Southwest Tasmania, although the extension is still pending; I was involved with the Franklin, I was arrested there; I was very much involved with the Great Barrier Reef result, which came up really well; I was involved with Fraser Island, stopping the sand mining there and getting the World Heritage listing for that." As Geoff says, he has been involved with so many different things it is hard to list them all.

In the assessment of others, Geoff's greatest achievement was the work he did for Antarctica. A week or two before speaking to Geoff I met with Karen Alexander from the Victoria Naturally Alliance. Karen is one of the lynchpins of the Australian environmental movement (see her profile in *Wild* no 118) and somehow we got talking about Geoff. Karen describes Geoff as 'visionary' for seeking the protocol banning all mineral activity in Antarctica. At the time, many people within the environmental movement thought he was aiming for the moon and were keen to take a more pragmatic approach, accepting mining, but seeking the best regulation possible. I ask Geoff why he aimed so high. "Because it is my nature to push for the best outcome. I believe you never ever lose anything by pushing for the ideal because even if you don't get the ideal, you get a better deal than if you'd gone for a compromise. If you'd actually gone for a compromise then you're most likely to get a compromise on a political level, so you get a better compromise by going for the ideal – and I've actually proven that over and over again. In this instance, of course, we not only went for the ideal, we got it."

It hasn't all been victories, though. At one point Geoff says, "you haven't asked me about my defeats yet." So I ask him. His

answer mirrors a response he gave 30 years earlier in *Wild*, when asked about what areas of conservation needed the most urgent attention. Back then Geoff said there were two broad areas: the need to defend our natural heritage, while the second was infinitely more ambitious – to challenge the concept of endless economic growth. Geoff is the Australian Director of the Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy. He explains: "My aim is to not only challenge the existing economic paradigm, but to open people's eyes to other possibilities. The way I have tried to explain it is: you can either be in the trenches and try and stop them, for example you can seize the high ground and get a national park before they do this damage, or you can deal with the cause. The idea of endless economic and population growth is the thing that is causing all the damage and just sitting in the trench and hoping for the best or exercising damage control, or management of damage, is just not good enough." How much success has he had in challenging the paradigm of growth? "Zero."

When I ask Geoff what he thinks is his greatest strength as an activist, he says, 'persistence.' A dogged determination must be a prerequisite for any successful campaigner and I have no doubt that Geoff has it in spades. Evidence of Geoff's persistence often unwittingly shows through. When we talk about defeats, he says, 'we lost Lake Pedder... so far.' For Geoff, defeat is never final. And, if you never admit defeat, then you never give up. This doesn't mean that he is endlessly positive about the future. Thirty years ago Geoff was asked whether he was pessimistic about environmental outcomes and his answer was yes. When I ask him, Geoff starts to say, 'now don't put this in the article...' before I interrupt him to tell him his answer from 30 years back. He chuckles, and admits, 'oh gosh, well look, I am a pessimistic optimist, call me a realistic optimist.'

Geoff's environmentalism goes hand-in-hand with his great love of Australia's wild places and he particularly enjoys off-track bushwalking. Despite admitting to slowing down, he is still an ambitious walker. In the last issue of *Wild* we ran his story of a walk through the untracked Old River region in Southwest Tasmania, a journey cut short by a torn calf muscle and ended in him being helicoptered out. When asked what areas he feels the closest sense of place to, his answer is surprising "I think I feel the greatest connection with the Australian Alps. It might be because they have the



Geoff Mosley in Tasmania's Old River region.
John Mosley

closest connection with where I grew up. On the northern moors of the Peak District, you've got the white hare, the eagle coming back. I live in a Green Wedge [in Melbourne] and I am heavily involved with protecting them. I do feel reasonably at home, but the strange thing is when I look out from where I live, I often think of where I used to look out where I grew up and I make the comparison between these vistas. I don't know what that tells me, but it must tell me something."

When we discuss more of Geoff's accomplishments, he laughs, while remembering a recent email from a friend about the celebration held for the ten-year anniversary of the World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains. Geoff missed the celebration, but his friend recounted the fact that there had been school children singing a song that included the line 'Geoff Mosley got his wish'. I believe that in his mind the battles he has lost are only minor setbacks, like losing a skirmish in a greater war.

Researching this article I came across this rather beautiful quote by Australian comedian Andrew Denton: 'If Antarctica were music it would be Mozart. Art, and it would be Michelangelo. Literature, and it would be Shakespeare. And yet it is something even greater; the only place on earth that is still as it should be. May we never tame it.' As much as anyone, we have Geoff Mosley and his indefatigable persistence to thank for this. **W**

The BIG *Three-O*

As part of our celebration of 30 years of *Wild*, we talk to five passionate outdoors people, experts in their respective fields of endeavour, about what has changed in that time and what the future holds



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Photo: Matthew Farrell

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GEAR AND ADVENTURE: TIM MACARTNEY-SNAPE

Tim Macartney-Snape is a renowned mountaineer who, along with Greg Mortimer, made the first Australian ascent of Mt Everest via a new route on the North Face without supplementary oxygen in 1984. In 1990 he climbed Mt Everest a second time, walking from sea level to the summit for the first time. *Sea to Summit* later became the name of the outdoor equipment company he founded, which has become a global success.

From my research, back in 1981 probably most of the really important pieces of gear had already been invented – Gore Tex, inflatable mats, synthetic thermals, etc – what do you believe would be the greatest innovation in gear?

Weight. Gear has become lighter. That really is the most important change. I wouldn't say waterproofness is that important an issue. Although waterproofness of footwear, of high altitude footwear anyway, has definitely made an enormous difference. When I started mountaineering, boots were exclusively made of leather. It was impossible to have waterproof leather boots back then. Eventually they became waterlogged and then they would freeze overnight and be a nightmare to put on. It made you so much more prone to frostbite, so the advent of synthetic materials for boots gave you total protection from that.

What do you think will be the next revolution in gear over the next 30 years? In however many hundreds of million years that they have been around, birds have had to cope with some extreme conditions and down is a pretty amazing product. If we were ever able to come up with a synthetic down, that would be a landmark innovation, because the production of birds for consumption leaves a lot to be desired. A synthetic down would be an incredible innovation. But mainly, I think the revolution will continue in making gear lighter, producing materials that will be stronger and lighter. I mean what else can you do? The ideal is to go out there and be in any wild environment and maintain your homeostasis (body temperature) levels of energy and water and trying to make it simple. But obviously, in order to survive, you need to carry some gear. And, the limiting factor is weight.

When did you first hear about *Wild*? We gave a lecture in Melbourne on our climb on Ama Dablam in 1981 and Chris [Baxter] got in touch and asked 'would you mind if I came and handed out some flyers for my new magazine?' I said no worries, because I already knew Chris

'If we were ever able to come up with a synthetic down, that would be a landmark innovation, because the production of birds for consumption leaves a lot to be desired. A synthetic down would be an incredible innovation.'

through climbing and also because he had come to my school to speak as well. So, even before the first issue was out I was definitely aware of it. I thought it was very exciting to have a magazine that was a bit more relevant, because from memory there really wasn't much around.

And, your Everest trip was actually sponsored by *Wild*? Yes, we were sponsored by *Wild* on the 1984 Everest trip. Chris gave us \$1000, which is not to be sneezed at, even though it was a very small part of our budget. The \$1000 was one thing, but it was more a mark of credibility in the outdoor sector that you had been sponsored by *Wild*. Being a small magazine it didn't hand out sponsorships willy-nilly. I think the \$1000 would be worth a lot more than from bigger magazines. I think it was a mark of confidence in Australian climbing, that we

might actually be able to pull it off, or even the fact that we were contemplating doing it.

The 1984 ascent was a cutting-edge ascent, do you think people are generally less adventurous now?

I think so. There are probably more people doing stuff, but fewer people doing original trips - trips that are really pushing the boundaries. I don't know why. I don't think it is the fact that there is nothing original left to do. Back in 1984 it was hard getting to a place like China. Getting information even on a well-known mountain like Everest on the north side, the best thing we had was a very blurry photo taken by the Indian Air force - someone had given it to Peter Boardman and his wife passed it on to Jim Duff who was the doctor on our trip. That was the best photo we had, that and a map made in 1924. Whereas these days, there is so much information; you can go on Google Earth, etc. And, there are literally thousands of very elegant mountains that aren't climbed, especially around the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. Those areas have traditionally been out of bounds and now it is easy to get access. There is so much to do.

I really don't think adventure is harder, I think it is easier. There seems to be, in Australia at least, a lack of first ascents. I really don't know what the reason for it is. Perhaps they take too much time these days. I mean, we get a lot of sponsorship requests [at Sea to Summit], but we often think what are you doing that someone else hasn't done? It's just a holiday, why would I give you money to go and do something I would love to do myself? If there was something that was innately original about it and risky, then certainly you would think that might be worthy of sponsorship, but so few projects are.

What, for you then, are the standout adventures of recent times? I think the standout one - I am not sure of the sanity of doing it - has to be Andrew McAuley [for those readers who are not familiar with Andrew, he attempted to sea

kayak across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand, eventually disappearing within sight of land], even though sadly he didn't make it, he nearly made it. It was an incredible thing to nearly pull off. I also think Jon Muir's solo trips are out there. They are the two things I would pick.



**YOUNG ADVENTURER:
JAMES CASTRISION**

James Castrission (on left in the photo) is one half of the adventure duo Cas and Jonesy (Justin Jones). Cas and Jonesy will be attempting to be the first to walk to the South Pole and back as this magazine goes to print (see the short interview in the Info pages). James and Jonesy's first really big adventure was their Crossing the Ditch expedition, where they paddled across the Tasman Sea from Australia to New Zealand, a trip that took them 62 days. James wasn't actually born when the first issue of *Wild* came out (he is 29), but we thought we would speak to him to get a youthful perspective on modern day adventure.

Do you think people are less adventurous than they used to be?

I think the *Heard-Sun* recently ran an article saying Australians are less adventurous than ever. I think in the general population we have become more risk adverse, we're always trying to outsource risk, so when people go on adventure they don't want to take responsibility for it themselves. They prefer to have a guide there and if something goes wrong, blame it on someone else. Unfortunately, I think that area of adventure has grown. But at the same time, when you are up in the Blue Mountains doing a climb or a canyon, or just walking, there's always people out and about. There's also Australians doing fantastic stuff all around the world in all different areas of adventure, whether it be BASE jumping, climbing, canyoning. Australians are out there pushing the limits. I've got a feeling - although I wasn't around 30 years ago - that the community was probably closer, more interlinked and that the transfer of knowledge, the getting together and all that sort of stuff, was probably greater than what it is now. I think the community is there, but it probably isn't as strong as what it once was.

A lot of the really big adventures seem to have been done, do you think it is harder to find original adventures? I'd have to agree with that in some areas of adventuring; all the big mountains and many of the great lines have been climbed,



Photo: James Cudahy Collection

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but at the same time there are emerging sports out there and new ways to express exploration and adventure. I mean, the stuff people are doing in the BASE jumping world wouldn't have been dreamt about five to ten years ago. There doesn't seem to be as many big expeditions, it might be because all the big firsts people are interested in have been done, or it might be because it really is bloody hard work to get a trip off the ground.

Are there any Australian adventurers around your age that you really respect? Absolutely. In climbing the Cossey brothers are just phenomenal, doing some fantastic climbing all around the world. In the polar regions...probably not so much, mountaineering...probably not so much again. I would have to give it a bit more thought actually.

What about older guys?

Glen Singleman has been a huge source of inspiration, advice, mentoring for us through the years. Lincoln Hall has also been extremely helpful as well. Most of those classical Australian adventurers who have done amazing stuff all around the world are pretty open to giving advice and lending a hand when you ask them.

Is there a standout adventure that you can think of from the last ten years?

I'd have to say Andrew Lock's achievements – climbing all 14 8000 metre peaks – is a phenomenal effort, the years' of dedication, the years' of risk, the years' of everything

he's gone through to achieve that, I don't think enough Australians understand how big an accomplishment that really is.

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THE ENVIRONMENT: KAREN ALEXANDER

Karen Alexander is the project leader of the Victoria Naturally Alliance, an organisation that coordinates the efforts of the nine major environmental groups, including groups like the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society and Bush Heritage Australia. She has been working in the environmental movement for more than 30 years and was an Wild's advisory board for the very first issue.

Am I right in thinking that 30 years ago the damming of the Franklin River would have been the biggest environmental issue of the time?

I think the Franklin was certainly the one where there was a really strong national momentum that was engaging with a lot of people. Although in 1981 many people on the mainland would still not have heard of the Franklin, it was a couple of years later that it really became national news. Probably every environmentalist would have heard of Lake Pedder, so those people may have been aware that there were new proposals affecting the Franklin.

What do you see as being the biggest environmental stories today?

I think there would be two things, and they would be captured in different ways. One is

clearly climate change and the other one would be the health of the natural environment, the biodiversity issues. However, if you ask me what the movement thinks are the most important issues, I suspect they would say climate change, then I think they would probably say forests rather than biodiversity. The biodiversity message still hasn't gotten through, even to some environmental groups.

Climate change is in the news all the time and most people have a good grasp of the issues, can you tell me more about the biodiversity crisis?

This is one of those slow developing crises, although I feel like we are in the thick of it already, it's just that it's hard to look out the window and see it. It's hard to see climate change as well, but in Victoria and elsewhere increased extreme weather events have, for some people, encapsulated what is likely to happen with climate change. It is very hard to get that same sense with biodiversity. My analogy is that it's a bit like a house – it's our eco-home. Like a house, you can take out the flooring, take out a window, take out a door, you can even take out some structural element – the house still stands, you can still live in it and find shelter, you might get water, probably have a fire, but at some stage a termite is going to take the next bite and it will collapse. Now you can rebuild a house from the materials you are sitting among, but you can't rebuild extinct species. So, the risk is that we don't act on this crisis until it's too late. We're not very good at acting on things that are yet to

come. For instance, in Victoria 44 per cent of native plants and 30 per cent of animals are either extinct or on the threatened species list in one form or another.

So the environment is worse off than it was 30 years ago?

All the data shows that the environment is in a much worse state. We've not reversed the decline even though that's the current policy.

What about the environmental movement, how has it changed in the last 30 years? We used to be able to be single issue focused, so you could stop a dam on the Franklin, stop mining on Fraser Island, stop logging, or try to, which was a relatively simple message. That's not been sufficient to ensure that our species and ecological systems are protected and although we still focus on single issues to some extent, like red gums or grasslands, now we have to look at how the whole thing hangs together and complicated notions like ecological processes. I mean how do you talk to the media and politicians about something that is complicated and hard to see? Running a campaign on protecting ecological processes, forget it. And, it is even worse today, with our simplified media messages, shorter, seven-second grabs and conflict

headlines. So, there's a challenge there in how do we talk with people, communicate to and hear back from people on biodiversity. And, that's where I think Wild and other organisations are important, as they help people to connect to places and the plants and animals that live in them.

In the next 30 years what do we need to do to avoid an environmental catastrophe?

Connect people to nature and to place. If we don't feel connected to it, why would we care about it and defend it? We need to be excited about the fact that we've got the tallest flowering plants in the world in *Eucalyptus regnans*, even though we are logging the shit out of them. We also have to be excited about that sense of connection to place. I mean looking out on grasslands is not everyone's idea of a dramatic landscape, and yet when you look more closely at those grasslands, especially at this time of year, you start to see dozens of different types of flowers and grasses and the diversity is really a hundred times more than you get in your front lawn. That feeling of connection with what is our home – and people will have different places that are their home – will be crucial for the survival of the places we know and love.

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WILD MAGAZINE: QUENTIN CHESTER

Quentin Chester is one of Wild's longest running regular contributors and his column, the *Wildlife*, is a much-loved regular department.

When did you first contribute to Wild? I did a glamorous rucksack survey in issue three, which seems like a long time ago – and it is.

What are the main changes you have seen in Wild in the last 30 years?

Probably the growing diversity of voices in the magazine. One of the big things that has changed is that the world of walking and outdoors stuff has become a little bit more mainstream. Even here on Kangaroo Island we have a walking club, which has an incredibly diverse bunch of people in it. They don't do overnight walks, but they do some pretty hard day walks. There is just a wider cross-section of people and that is reflected in the magazine. Whereas in the early days it was quite a close circle of people involved and they had a fairly likeminded approach to things. It was more about the kind of traditional, long bushwalking, canoe trips and cross-country skiing and all that kind of stuff.

In one of the early issues there was a climber on the cover, but I think it quickly became evident that bushwalking was the main thing that people wanted to see and hear about. Certainly the look and feel of the magazine has changed a lot with the changes in printing and photography. I mean you look at the first few issues and think that they look pretty old fashioned, and they are in a way, but at the time they were very smart publications. Although most of it was black and white and the photos are quite grainy, the general design and feel of it was pretty sharp for its time.

What do you think has been the greatest strength of the magazine?

I think because of Chris' [Baxter; the founder of Wild] extremely strong persona it kept a very steady pathway, it didn't try to deviate too much. I guess it was a consistency of delivery. The magazine came out when they said it was going to come out, which had been a bit of a problem for magazines. And also, the connection between Chris and his network of contacts and beyond to the readership was very strong. He created this sense of loyalty that still exists with people who follow the magazine. You can talk about the strength of the magazine in terms of the content,

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but, I think it basically comes down to a sense of relationship that exists between the people involved, the producers of the publication and the readers.

Have you had any favourite articles yourself?

What I really love is some of the people focus that has come along through the magazine over the years, particularly profile stories on some of the people who have made a contribution. I think everyone loves to talk about wilderness areas and their favourite walk and what happened, but I

think it is nice when you get a story that actually charts somebody who has had historical significance for an area, or an activity or a club. And, I think some of these profile stories have been really important, because Australia is a big country and it doesn't have an easy way for people to feel connected. These stories provide a sense of community. You know, there will be a story about some guy who has run a walking group in Queensland somewhere and their experiences echo some of your own; it is nice to feel that sense of connection, as well as a common interest in place.

Has the *Wildlife* changed much over the years?

In some of the early stories I was trying to be a little more overtly comic, whereas they are probably more serious now than they used to be, which is probably just a part of growing older and more conservative. And, I think there is a slight change in subject matter, it reflects where I am with my life. At the moment I am leaning a lot on the experiences of where we are living, whereas in the past it was a lot more about the destinations that I was going to for work. There were stories about doing trips with the kids when they were little and that sort of thing doesn't happen so much any more. So, there is an autobiographical element to them that is naturally changing

'I think the really important thing is that the places that we all really love to visit haven't changed much at all and that's the reason we go to them. These places are as they are. We are all busy doing things – writing magazine stories or eagerly awaiting the next issue of *Wild* – but, as all that kind of stuff happens the world goes on and the natural areas are unchanged.'

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Photo: Craig Ingram

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**OUTDOOR EDUCATION:
SANDY ALLEN-CRAIG**

Sandy Allen-Craig has been a teacher for more than 30 years and has worked in outdoor education for 25 years. She was recently awarded a citation for the Australian Awards for University Teaching for her contribution to student learning in her role as a lecturer at the Australian Catholic University.

Has outdoor education changed much in the last 30 years?

It has changed a huge amount. Initially in the 1980s and into the 1990s, outdoor education was really more ad hoc – very few schools offered a comprehensive programme. That changed in the late 1990s and early 2000s when it became recognised as a curriculum subject. Outdoor education has also changed in its

emphasis, because it used to be based purely on personal development and now it's much more about incorporating environmental education into it and also looking at ways you can use these opportunities to connect students with nature. It's changed from the Outward Bound model to an educational process that is about developing the individual, but also developing them in terms of their relationship with nature. And ultimately, that they might develop a sustainable, ongoing, caring relationship with nature.

What do you think is the most important thing that outdoor education brings to students?

I think there are two areas that are incredibly important and it's changed over the years. If you had asked me ten or 15 years ago, I would have thought the main point was for the students to have a chance to have an adventure, explore, learn about decision-making and teamwork and develop self-confidence. But, in the last ten or 15 years, particularly with the way our world's changing and how much time the latest generation spends indoors away from nature, I'd say it's become even more important for them to just be out in the natural world and experiencing and building some sort of affinity for it.

'Outdoor education is powerful because it offers both platforms, this development of self, but also this parallel awakening of the awareness of the beauty and also the fragility I suppose, of the natural world and the role we play in that.'

The research shows that until you feel comfortable in nature you can't develop a relationship with it. So, say you are paddling down a river and you are worried about tipping in all the time and what's going to be beyond the next rapid, if you interview those students they don't actually really notice the environment they're in very much because they are more worried about their immediate safety. But, if you can provide students with enough skills and knowledge so that they feel comfortable in nature, then they actually will move on to the next step, which is 'wow, this is beautiful'. They will have the mental energy to look around and have this whole epiphany of 'Oh my goodness, this is important to me and I love this and how valuable is this resource'. Unless you give students the skills to feel comfortable you won't necessarily get this outcome. It is a

awareness of the beauty and also the fragility I suppose, of the natural world and the role we play in that.

You have been working in outdoor education for a long time, do you still enjoy it?

I love it, I absolutely love it. So, there are two things; you know I can be skiing along with a group of students – it could be fogged-in or snowing, or it could be a beautiful day, it doesn't seem to matter – but, I am always just in awe of how beautiful it all is. Every time I get out there with a group of students I just think how lucky am I to be out here – and this is my job. And, the other thing I love is seeing that click with the students, when they all of a sudden have confidence that they can do something; if it is an outdoor pursuit they've been struggling with, like paddling

Photo: Dean Allen-Craig collection



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simple step, but you can't take people and plonk them in the bush and expect them to fall in love with the bush and it will be alright. They've got to actually feel comfortable, then they can open their eyes and look around.

Outdoor education is powerful because it offers both platforms, this development of self, but also this parallel awakening of the

or climbing, or skiing or surfing, or whatever it is. There's that sudden self-awareness that they are confident and they are capable and they can do this. But, it's also that click of 'this is beautiful, I love this'. It's being able to walk beside them and having the privilege of seeing the lights go on in their own experience.'

A lot of outdoor activities seem to be male dominated, is this reflected in outdoor education?

I think in terms of participants it's pretty even now. In universities it's determined by ENTER scores and a lot of girls do very well compared to boys. In my courses they've got to have a good ENTER score, so it's certainly even and in quite a few cases there are more girls than boys. I think the biggest thing you can still notice is in the actual profession. Among my peers I know of very few females still in the field.

Why do you think this is the case?

I think it is hard on you physically. I have had three children, but I never stopped, I went part-time – apart from one year off when they were all under four. If you step out of the profession for too long you lose the confidence to enter back in. To be taking people into remote areas and you're responsible for their lives is a serious proposition and if you step out of it to have a family I don't think you would ever come back to it. There are very few women once you get into the late 30s. It's hard to have a family and be away on trips all the time. So, you have to end up being in a job where you are out but not an onerous amount – like I have done. **W**

Wild WEST COAST Wanderings



John Wilde braves the roaring forties to spend 26 days paddling down the West Coast of Tasmania

It was 4am and dark. Not just almost dark, but pitch black, as though we were in a deep cave. The puny light of our headtorches shone down to the beach and the small boat ramp, but beyond, the boom of surf and rocky shores to the south could have been figments of our imagination. They were not.

The previous night it had seemed easy. A big southwesterly front was to hit Strahan in the early afternoon of the next day, suggesting that getting on the water early and beating the front to Strahan was our

best plan. There we could resupply for up to another three weeks and spend a bit of 'RnR' time in the 'Big Smoke'. Perhaps even a shower for the first time in two weeks and some fresh fruit to eat...

It didn't feel so easy as we staggered down to the boat ramp in the dark and rain with our heavily loaded sea kayaks. The plan had been rough: up at 3am, a bowl of muesli, pack up tents and gear, ready to move at 4am. At this groggy, sleepless hour we worked like automatons, boats packed and launched. But, we had all assumed that

there would be some light: at least a horizon line, a few stars, the last of the moon... In the drizzle and mist we still stuck to the plan. It was only after launching, that the flaws in it became apparent. Harry Hau headed left trying to follow the cliff line, Keith Albury headed right, towards the booming 'bommie'. I tried to keep contact with the whole group, glimpsing bobbing headtorches in the swell. Suddenly Guy Reeve's Sergeant Major-voice pierced the chaos, 'Just follow me lads, I'll lead and I've got our track on

Left, unusually calm conditions on the West Coast. **Below**, a cave in Spain Bay.
All photos by Guy Reeve



wholesome than a muesli bar.

The previous couple of days we had been lucky. After three days weatherbound by a big southerly at Marrawah, the sound of flapping tents starting to drive us mad, we had finally headed out on an eight-metre swell, which rapidly dropped to a mere five metres, allowing us to land at the sheltered Sandy Cape despite the mountains of green water sliding past us as we fought our way south. The next day, with the swell again dropping, this time from five metres to below three metres, we slipped into Granville Harbour, little knowing that at swells above three metres, the reef protecting Granville closed out. That meant that even this solitary, lonely safe refuge in the 110-kilometre stretch between South Cape and Strahan would be totally inaccessible.

When planning the trip a good friend from Strahan had delighted in telling me about the rescue of two kayakers who had not been so lucky. Reaching Granville towards the end of a long day, they were horrified to see the entrance was a mass of dashing foam. Electing to stay at sea for the night, one of them then capsized and swam in big seas, his friend getting him back in the kayak. This disheartened them and they set off their EPIRB. As the Tasmanian rescue helicopter cannot winch at night, they were forced to spend a frightening and uncomfortable night in big swells until a fishing boat could pick them up at dawn. This is not a coast to be trifled with.

The previous couple of weeks had seen some awesome paddling. Launching at Devonport, paddling past Burnie, the coastal towns of the North West had passed easily, leading to a remote campsite at Anniversary Bay, near Sisters Beach. Next, a day of fast, furious sailing to Stanley and a night of pure pleasure on Robbins Island. We camped by a superb beach and were wined and dined by the owners, Keith and Lisa, in their stunning 'shack' with views to die for.

The next day in flat calm we marvelled at beaches made completely of minute, intact shells as delicate as snowflakes and tackled the overfalls where Bass Strait empties twice a day off Woolnorth Point. Finally, rounding Cape Grim on day six, the West Coast let us know we had begun our real journey. Big swells and unpredictable 'bommies', reefs and strong winds hit us hard. Bays, which on maps and charts looked sheltered and enticing, closed out hundreds of metres from shore. Twenty-five to 30 knot winds tried to rip our paddles from our hands, while swells constantly rolled our kayaks from side to side, causing us to always be alert and ready to brace hard at any time. Thus to Marrawah and a three-day enforced break, as massive southerly winds and swells swept up the coast and all before them took shelter, including the biggest fishing boats.

Beyond Strahan we again played Russian roulette with the swells and reefs, sliding by the skin of our teeth through narrow

the GPS.' Thank goodness for modern conveniences. There aren't many on the West Coast of Tassie.

Thus we probed our way out of Granville Harbour on day ten of our West Coast odyssey. Fifteen minutes later we were clear of the 'bommies', boomerang surf and abrupt cliff lines and all we had to do was follow our bearing of 150° for the next 11 hours. The first seven hours, even after dawn, kept us tightly knit in our shroud of mist and rain until finally, just before midday, a distant view of Macquarie Heads and the lighthouse at Cape Sorell emerged from the gloom. At 3pm, after slowly making way against a rapidly ebbing Macquarie Harbour, we had a chance to test our legs again, crawling out of boats to inspect campsites, seek warmth and swallow something more



gaps and rips in huge surf zones to land at Gorge Point and Evans River, where we found shelter and stunning campsites. Off shore, huge 'bommies' and massive reefs constantly broke the horizon, enticing us to try and get the most dramatic photos of our fellow paddlers against sheets of white water tossed recklessly against rocky backdrops, without any of us being in mortal danger.

After several days of headwinds we again had decisions to make at the Giblin River in

Nye Bay. The forecast was for increasing swells, a two to three metre sea and a strong southwesterly wind. With this in mind, we decided to pull into Mulcany Bay after a short ten-kilometre paddle, in the process discovering one of the most pleasant campsites we visited. It also gave me time to snorkel for a big feed of abalone. It was frustrating, however, to find the day calm throughout and no sign of the big storm. Listening anxiously to the latest forecast that night we realised that the front

Clockwise from above, Day 12 and six hours into the ten hour paddle to Hells Gates and still no sight of land; the eyes and headtorches provide clues as to what the exit from Granville Harbour was like at 4am earlier that morning. Passing rocky bluffs near Stephens Beach. A deluxe camp for the night. Day 14, George Point camp.

had been delayed and yet again we had a short weather window the following day to reach our next objective: Spain Bay and Bathurst Harbour.

Another pre-dawn start had us doing a surf breakout with virtually no light, a truly eerie experience and heading, with all haste, to Point St Vincent, the entrance to Port Davey. Here we were met with 25–30 knot headwinds and for a while progress was slow, but we finally battled into Spain Bay, taking three hours for the last nine kilometres, well ahead of the southwesterly change and the 45-knot winds.

Inspection of campsites in Spain Bay, which all seemed dark and dank after our last few nights' camps, led us to settle on the beach beneath a stand of melaleuca and coastal scrub, but a local fishing boat sheltering in the bay was quite concerned that we would literally get blown away in such an exposed spot and came ashore to warn us of impending doom. The evening



forecast confirmed that we could expect 45-knot winds shortly, so just on dusk three of us decided to move into a more sheltered site in the bush, while Keith elected to batton down and tie his tent to anything solid, including his kayak. After a very stormy night, it was with some relief that we walked back to find Keith happy and well, despite being buffeted by strong winds all night.

By evening we were sitting in awe, watching the massive swells rolling into Port Davey, then the wind up to 50 knots [100 kilometres per hour] lifting off great

sheets of water and hurling them into the mountains beyond. Over the next four days we managed to walk south to Noyenheimers Beach, on the classic Southwest Cape Track, discovering huge whale vertebrae and massive Indigenous shell middens on Stephens Beach. I could only try to imagine the thousands of years local people had feasted here to create these veritable dunes of shells, certainly enjoying and celebrating this bounty from the sea.

Finally the forecast suggested an easing swell and conditions suitable for a rounding of Southwest Cape. We were able to slip out





Span Bay Creek making its way to the ocean.

past Hilliard Head, at once feeling the full force of the swell, still with a sizeable sea on top. As we neared the cape, big waves broke on occasion – even a kilometre off shore – the rebound from the cliffs, the sea and the swell, combining to create some challenging conditions. Both Keith and I were picked up by massive breaking waves and side-surfed for up to 50 metres on big, tumbling waves of water.

With the impressive cliffs and 'dragon's

we were flying along with the wind at our backs and our minds set on the shelter of New Harbour and the chance to wind down, relax and enjoy the luxury of a perfect, grassy campsite.

The following day with a tailwind and sails set, we headed along the South Coast, an area familiar to me after a number of walks along the South Coast Track. Big surf kept us well clear of the coast, however, landmarks like Louisa Bay, the Ironbound

normally sheltered from a southeasterly swell, but on passing Surprise Bay Keith spotted a calm corner and with some relief, we crept in, looking over our shoulders to avoid the bigger sets and managing to sneak in through the rip against a cliff line and gain a sheltered landing.

That night, wind and rain hammered us, but so close to our goal, Cockle Creek, little could distract us. The following morning, in the calmest conditions of the trip, we rounded South and South East capes, entering the tranquil waters of Recherche Bay. Finally we had time to watch the kelp sway to and fro in the crystal clear waters and reminisce on the last 26 days, in some ways like a lifetime, in others a passing moment, as we gently nudged our boats on to the soft, sandy beach of our final goal.

Still stunned by the majesty, wilderness and raw power of this imposing coastline, we began our return to modern life with many regrets. The simplicity of facing such a challenge, the chance to observe nature in a pure, raw sense is for me, the essence of life. We will do well to observe and learn from this great power and the hold it will always have over our fragile human lives. **W**

'With the impressive cliffs and 'dragon's tail' skyline of Southwest Cape, the mountains of water careering past us, flights of albatross wheeling in close to inspect us with curious eyes and the wind starting to howl again, this was the most exciting, memorable and at times plain frightening experience that I have had for some time while kayaking.'

tail' skyline of Southwest Cape, the mountains of water careering past us, flights of albatross wheeling in close to inspect us with curious eyes and the wind starting to howl again, this was the most exciting, memorable and at times plain frightening experience that I have had for some time while kayaking. After rounding the cape conditions started to ease and soon

Range, Prion Beach and the slopes of Precipitous Bluff, summit shrouded in mist, brought back many memories. Our intended camp was to be Rocky Boat Harbour, a secluded spot away from the walking track, but big surf across the entrance soon caused us to revise plans. Instead, we considered heading to South Cape Rivulet, 20 kilometres further and

John Wilde has spent much of his life looking for a 'proper' job, but ended up working full time with young people in the outdoors for many years. He was a contributor to the very first *Wild* magazine.

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Grass-Finches

Capturing the spectacular world of native grass-finches
Words and images by *John Cooper*



Australia boasts 18 species of native grass-finches from some 124 found around the world. Our grass-finches are renowned for the variation in their plumage, while their popularity as cage birds makes them one of the best studied bird families.

However, since the turn of the 20th century many of these species have declined as a result of changes to their habitat, illegal trapping (particularly the very attractive Gouldian finch) and competition with introduced species such as the nutmeg mannikin finch from Southeast Asia. For example, diamond firetail and the plum-headed finches were once plentiful in large flocks but now are only occasionally seen in small parties.

Apart from the widespread zebra finch, the red-browed finch inhabits the widest variety of habitats of any Australian grass-finches. It's just as much at home in the hot tropics as it is in the colder southern regions. It is also the most trusting of humans, frequently visiting home gardens and parks to feed on seeding grasses or free handouts. During the breeding season insects are also sought after and mealworms will be readily accepted.

When it comes to nests the red-browed finch is a prolific if somewhat erratic nest builder. The typical nest, when completed, is a bulky, flask-shaped construction of dried or green grasses, usually placed in a prickly tree or bush. Parents mate for life and share incubation, both spending the night in the nest.

The zebra finch is the most widespread and numerous of the Australian grass-finches found throughout mainland Australia and while some species of grass-finches have suffered from European settlement, the zebra finch is one that has actually benefited. Because of the bird's need to drink as often as every hour it has been able to extend its geographical range with the introduction of artificial water supplies such as farm dams, bores, weirs

and other catchment areas. It is now found in areas where it was once unable to penetrate, becoming quite tame and trusting to humans, though not to the same degree as the red-browed finch.

Because of their dependence on reliable water supplies, the presence and movement of zebra finches was often used by aborigines and inland explorers to locate water-holes.

The double-barred finch, sometimes referred to as the owl-faced finch, is also widely distributed, from across northern and eastern Australia, and as far south as Victoria. It has also benefited from European settlement and now prefers the company of humans. In Queensland it has become a frequent visitor to parks and gardens and the margins of cereal crops. They are very sociable and mixed flocks of red-browed and zebra finches are sometimes seen together feeding on fallen grass seeds.

'The presence and movement of zebra finches was often used by aborigines and inland explorers to locate water-holes.'

The double-barred finch is a rather poor nest builder, constructing an untidy sphere of dry grass stems, with a short entrance tunnel on one side. Prickly shrubs are usually selected for nest building as the foliage provides protection from predators. Often nests are constructed near wasps' nests. If their nest is disturbed so too is the wasps' giving added protection to the finches.

Left, a double-barred finch and a red-browed finch sharing the branch of a flowering eucalypt.

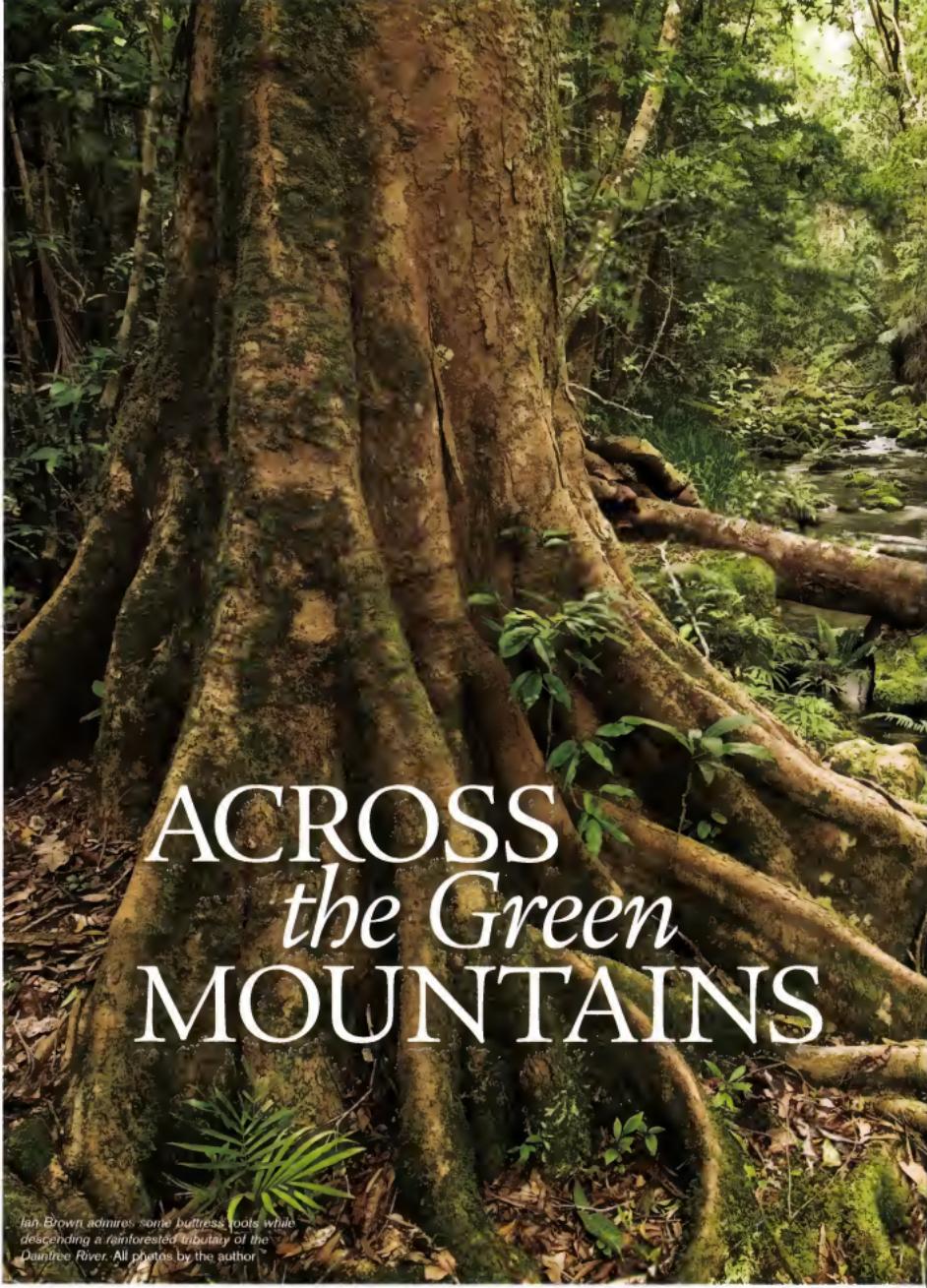






Clockwise from above, a double-barred finch on gum nuts. A group of playful red-browed finches and yellow paper daisies. The handsome zebra finch sitting on a pine cone. A red-browed finch resting on the pods of a kurrajong tree.

John Cooper has been an amateur naturalist with a special interest in Australian native birds for most of his adult life. It wasn't until about 20 years ago that John decided to record his subjects on film. He soon developed a deep and abiding passion for nature photography that continues to this day.



ACROSS *the Green* MOUNTAINS

Ian Brown admires some buttress roots while descending a rainforested tributary of the Daintree River. All photos by the author.



Grant Dixon spends 16-days traversing the Daintree National Park in Far North Queensland

In Far North Queensland, the Great Dividing Range runs closer to the coast than anywhere else. In the Daintree River country, jungle-clad slopes rise steeply to elevations in excess of 1300 metres, within sight of tropical beaches. Beyond, a series of dissected tablelands extend inland and comprise a large area of undisturbed tropical rainforest and woodland. These forests, relics from Gondwana 100 million years ago, were listed as World Heritage in 1988. While not perhaps universally inviting as a destination for an extended bushwalk, the large area of wild and largely trackless country was attractive enough for Ian Parrish and myself to plan a mid-dry season crossing, from Mossman to the inland road and on to Cooktown.

Unbalanced by heavy packs, we hopped between rounded granite boulders towards Mossman Gorge. The gorge cuts deep into the tableland, but while its unseen depths were to be our companion for several days, it was not our route. The green wall of the escarpment reared above, blocking out half the sky, and it was up there we had to go.

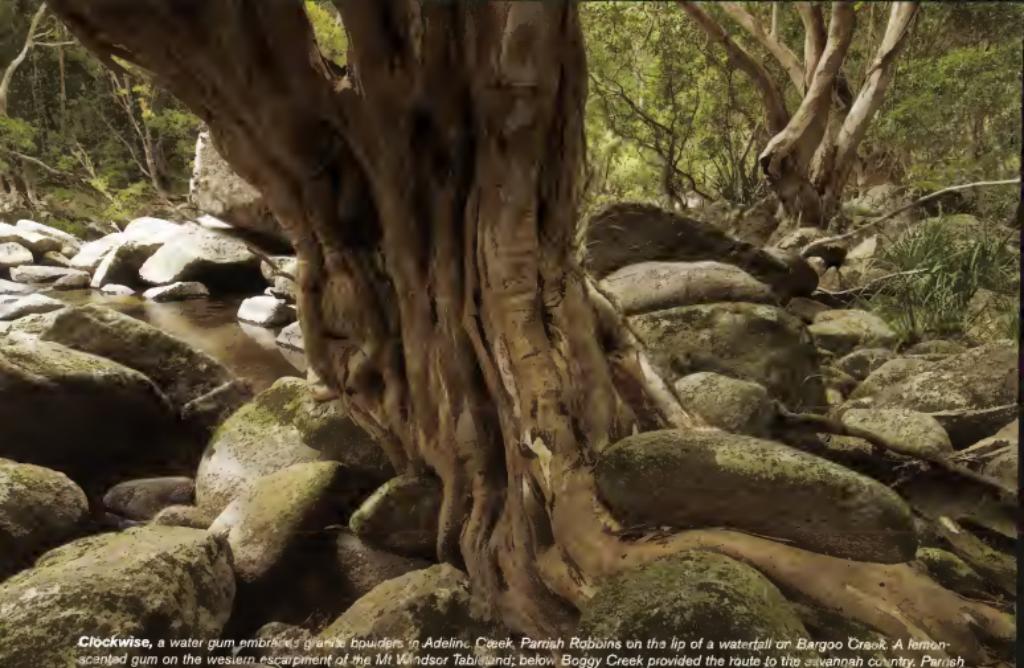
Leaving the sunny riverbed we dragged ourselves up the riverbank and beneath the closed forest canopy, ascended steeply. It may have been shady, but the forest air was still and warm. Sweat filled my eyes and soaked my clothes as I hauled myself upwards, aided by vines and whatever vegetation was handy. Short sections of feral pig tracks eased the way at times. But, blundering into lawyer or wait-a-while vines, which are fine and often hard to see, was an occasional hazard, their directional 'claws' grabbing clothing or packs (or ripping into any exposed neck or arm skin; a good reason for wearing gloves and a long-sleeved shirt in this country). Once caught, the assistance of others was often necessary to disentangle oneself.

A saddle with a small creek and refreshing pool nearby inspired an early stop for the day, although we were barely halfway up the escarpment. Fluorescent fungi and a few leeches provided excitement during our first night under a fly in the dark rainforest.

Leaving soon after the birds announced dawn, we struggled on steeply upward, cresting the escarpment within a few hours. Still beneath a thick canopy we traversed undulating terrain, with rock gardens and wet gullies. While we were often near the edge of the escarpment, views into Mossman Gorge below were filtered at best.

The summit comprised granite whalebacks that rose from the dense canopy and we eventually hauled ourselves up onto one of these. Big, gnarled, moss-laden and apparently ancient tea trees grew in deep crevices. A cold, mist-laden easterly breeze allowed only glimpses of the other magnificent surroundings and provided a damp and windy night.

Dawn was clear but still very windy. Enjoyment of the spectacular view to the bluffs beyond Mossman Gorge was brief as we broke camp and rugged up against the freezing gale. A scramble, some steep sidling and a bit of scrub saw us back beneath the forest canopy and warm again. Open forest walking then prevailed for a while, a highlight being copes of purple kauri trees, their smooth and exfoliating trunks a contrast to the



Clockwise, a water gum embraces granite boulders in Adeline Creek, Parish Robins on the lip of a waterfall on Bargoo Creek, A lemon-scented gum on the western escarpment of the Mt Windsor Tableland; below Boggy Creek provided the route to the savannah country. Parish and Ian consult the map while navigating undulating woodland on the Mt Windsor Tableland.



surrounding forest. Lunch on a sandbank, amid a cascading creek, provided the opportunity to rinse three day's sweat from bodies and clothes. Heading upstream later, we eventually camped on a ridge above its headwaters, stars twinkling through gaps in the forest canopy.

The next day, not for first or last time, careful compass navigation proved essential to traversing a landscape with no distant views. We followed a series of dry forested ridges, open sections carpeted with crackly leaf litter underfoot, alternating with dense vine thickets. Late in the day, tall, smooth, pale-

barked boles of eucalypts appeared in the forest for the first time.

Now in the Daintree River headwaters, we followed a small creek downstream, criss-crossing on mossy logs at first until the forest became more open. Entering the gorge country, our style of progress changed, with slab traverses and rock hopping interrupted by scrambles to circumvent small cascades. Additional excitement was provided by a three-metre python curled beneath a clump of swordgrass.

Following a high saddle above a steep wall, the valley opened and dropped dramatically.

Reaching the top of these first major falls, the swathes of smooth granite either side of the ribbons of water hinted at what this place must be like in the wet season. At the base of the falls all eyes fixed on a perfect 50-metre natural waterslide into a deep pool. Parrish was game enough to give it a go first. When he returned obviously exhilarated and without lacerated buttocks from any protruding crystals in the granite, Ian and I had to try it too.

After a warm night camped on the first of many sandbanks, we continued downstream, but the easy travel proved short-lived. An ominous opening of the valley heralded the lip of a 100-metre drop into a dark-walled gorge with no apparent direct route down. Fig roots provided welcome handholds as we climbed a precipitous slope above the falls, then long grass that hid loose rocks on a steep traverse to a narrow crest and the top of an equally-steep descent back to the river downstream of the falls. Once there we barely hesitated, diving in fully clothed and rinsing sweat and forest filth from our clothes. Platypus and bright blue Ulysses butterflies were the day's wildlife highlights.

The next day was an easy riverbank stroll, with many sandbanks and water gums. Hence I was wearing shorts when we decided to explore a side creek that the map suggested contained a waterfall. We scrambled up the steep slabs and boulders then, enjoying the



'The lip of the falls offered an excellent campsite and our first really extensive views for a week, so we unanimously prescribed a rest day. I descended a ridge beside the falls to a fascinating area where twisted water gums embraced boulders amongst braided stream channels, then explored the complex interplay of cascades, pools and falls, by climbing back up ribs and slabs between the ribbons of the falls themselves.'

freedom of being unencumbered by packs, elected to follow an alternative route down. Following remnants of feral pig tracks down a steep gully, I blundered into a small stinging tree, the leaves catching me across both exposed thighs. It was not pleasant, the sharp instant pain spreading over subsequent minutes. Back at the river a swim produced a sharp increase in discomfort initially, before improving, but unpleasant sensations returned at times over subsequent days.

We sighted several cattle during the afternoon and a patch of lantana infested the slope above the night's camp. The next day we climbed away from the Daintree River – and these reminders that the wild country has limits – to spend several days traversing a complex network of ridges and streams towards the Mt Windsor Tableland.

The creeks contained a series of delightful cascades and a couple of impressive

waterfalls, welcome scenic breaks when staggering upstream on slippery rocks. The intervening ridges were sometimes sinuous, sometimes roller-coaster and always cloaked in dense forest, so careful navigation was essential, but didn't help to avoid lawyer vine surprises. Nor did it prevent us sloshing aimlessly among a maze of channels within a vine-rich alluvial flat forest for a couple of hours. Backtracking, we followed the deep main creek channel downstream, sometimes wading over waist depth, which was easy but rather wet. As the valley widened the stream grew and changed character and we rock hopped the last section to the top of Adeline Falls, which plunges 200 metres in a series of steep cascades down the escarpment.

The lip of the falls offered an excellent campsite and our first really extensive views for a week, so we unanimously prescribed a rest day. I descended a ridge beside the falls to

a fascinating area where twisted water gums embraced boulders among braided stream channels, then explored the complex interplay of cascades, pools and falls, by climbing back up ribs and slabs between the ribbons of the falls themselves.

Rock hopping back upstream above the falls provided straightforward progress for a while, but leaving the open river to head westwards was necessary. The forest was slow going, with lots of lawyer vines and even though we were now quite adept at spotting them before becoming entangled, here they were sometimes so thick that one could move to avoid a vine spotted ahead or above and become snared from the side. The rainforest ended abruptly with the appearance of a large flooded gum, then open forest with cypress pine groves. The easy going was welcome, but the day ended with a series of cattle tracks and a depressingly large infestation of lantana filling a small valley.

A day of gloriously easy walking took us along the northern edge of the Mt Windsor Tableland. We first traversed ridges cloaked in open grassy woodland with scattered granite outcrops then, after collecting water for the night at a one of the mostly-dry small creeks, ambled along rock pavements on the escarpment edge. The northwest apex of the tableland is an outlying granite dome and I sat atop it for a while watching the scudding clouds and a pair of peregrine

falcons wheeling above, until the strong wind drove me back to shelter and camp in the saddle below.

Wandering southwards, we crossed several ridges between near-dry streams, exploring interesting outcrops and small chasms en route and watching some water dragons at one pool, before descending to the sand-floored valley of Boggy Creek. The character of this stream changed as we headed downstream looking for a spot to camp; granite boulders and slabs appeared and we selected a campsite on slabs beside a swimming pool. Less than 200 metres west of our camp, Boggy Creek cuts a deep notch through the tableland's western escarpment, with bluffs and tors arrayed above and small cliffs and slabs seemingly everywhere on the wooded slopes below. I viewed sunset from this airy perch and attempted to concoct the most feasible descent route for the next day.

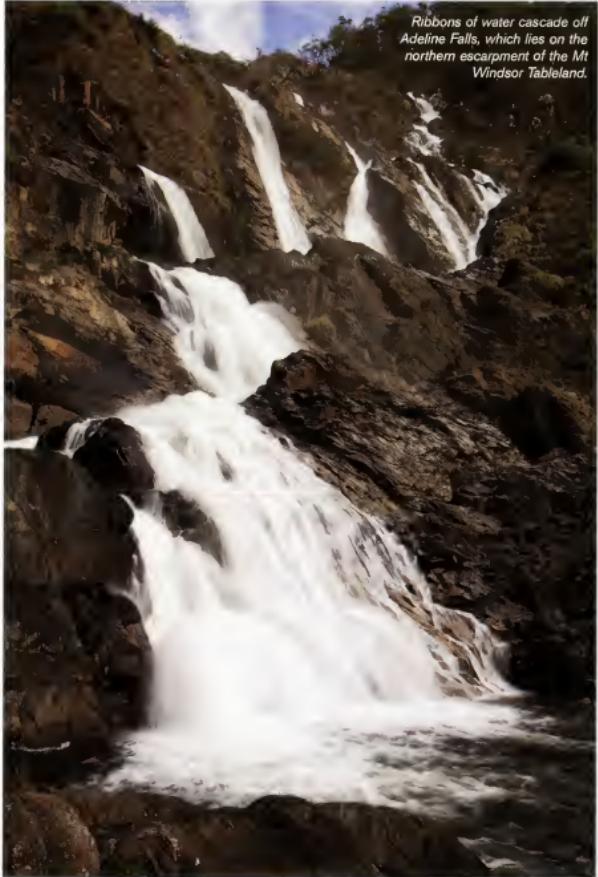
We descended a series of gullies and ribs, the terrain steep and often loose, to reach polished slabs in the bed of Boggy Creek at the base of the escarpment. Rock hopping and pleasant slab walking then took us to the base of the slope, after which we followed cattle tracks beside the dry stream bed. The vegetation had now changed dramatically – savannah woodland stretched as far as one could see, with patches of gallery forest along the stream bed and provided very much an inland feel to the country.

We came upon a grass-fringed waterhole at the confluence with Prospect Creek suddenly, glimpsing a couple of freshwater crocodiles as they slid into a pool. Now less enthusiastic about a swim, we wandered on following the sandy riverbed downstream, past more large pools, stands of paperbarks, and increasing signs of cattle. We made fast progress and climbing a nearby knoll after our last dinner, the Mt Windsor Tableland already seemed a distant blue scarp.

Now in degraded cattle country, I reflected on the country we had crossed to get here, the great contrasts in landform and vegetation from the coastal mountains to the dry inland, the waterfall and wildlife highlights, and other pockets of wild country in a vast continent that I might yet explore.

A few hours walk the next morning took us to the road, stopping to rinse body and clothes in one of the cleaner-looking waterholes. Food fantasies were not fulfilled by the Palmer River Roadhouse fare and a disappointing 'burger sat in my stomach while we waited for the afternoon bus back to Cairns. W

Grant Dixon is a widely-published Tasmanian-born nature photographer and a professional natural scientist. While he has explored many parts of the planet, there remain many wild parts of Australia on his wish list; this was one of them.



30 YEARS, 30 PARKS

To celebrate *Wild's* 30th anniversary issue we have assembled a brief outline of Australia's 30 most popular parks and, where we have them, included a reference to relevant track notes that we have uploaded to our website (wild.com.au) and you can download for free. Enjoy.

ACT

Namadgi National Park

Encompassing grassy plains, snow gum forests and alpine meadows, Namadgi is the ACT's only national park, covering a substantial 46 per cent of the territory. Activities include: bushwalking, camping, riding, horse riding, fishing and skiing.

TRACK NOTES: 'Capital Walking', by Martin Chalk, *Wild* no 54.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Kakadu National Park

As one of Australia's most iconic parks, the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park is a treasure trove of flora and fauna biodiversity, landforms, rock art sites and living Indigenous culture. Activities include bushwalking, but walkers are required to get a permit for overnight walks and must be suitably experienced. Canoeing and fishing are popular and there's loads of campsites to be enjoyed.

TRACK NOTES: 'Kakadu's Arnhem Land Plateau', by John and Lyn Daly, *Wild* no 108.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

Uluru is easily Australia's most internationally famous national park; its famed red silhouette instantly recognisable in much the same way as the Sydney Opera House. The park has a lot of day walks, from the summit climb (which is discouraged by the Indigenous owners) to the popular walk around the base of the mountain.

TRACK NOTES: 'Top Territory Day Walks', by Catherine Lawson, *Wild* no 115.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Blue Mountains National Park

Just a short drive from Sydney, there was never going to be any doubt that the majestic Blue Mountains would be included. The deep cliff-lined valleys and high plateaus of the Blueys are an outdoor enthusiast's paradise offering a huge range of activities: bushwalking (day walks as well as multiday), rockclimbing, caving, canyoning, fishing as well as BASE jumping in the Grose Valley.

TRACK NOTES: 'Blue Gum Forest', by Mel Davis, *Wild* no 70.

Royal National Park

Sitting just south of Sydney, Royal National Park is enormously popular. It

offers a host of activities, from the fantastic multiday Coast Track (which is accessible by public transport) and a number of shorter day walks, to canoeing, swimming, snorkeling, camping, fishing and cycling.

TRACK NOTES: 'The Coast Walk', by Anna Warr, *Wild* no 114.

Kosciuszko National Park

Home to Australia's highest peak, Mt Kosciuszko and the iconic Snowy River, this park is truly a wonderland for bushwalkers, for whom it holds a lifetime of walking. Activities include many multiday bushwalks, on and off-track, many day walks, as well as cross-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding.



A copse of snow gums at the headwaters of the Snowy River, Kosciuszko National Park. All images by Grant Dixon.

camping, fishing, caving, canoeing and cycling.

TRACK NOTES: 'Northern Snowies Wilderness Ramble', by Glenn van der Knijff, Wild no 125.

Sydney Harbour National Park

Many people may not even realise there is a national park right in the midst of Sydney, but the Sydney Harbour National Park incorporates North Head, Middle and Georges Heads, Dobroyd Head, Bradleys Head, South Head and Nielsen Park. While there is a small amount of short walks here, mostly it is about swimming, fishing and eating icecream.

TRACK NOTES: no.

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

Sitting north of Sydney, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park borders the spot where the Hawkesbury River meets the sea. The park is home to a variety of habitats from high heathlands to densely forested hillsides and mangrove flats. Activities include short day walks, swimming, rockclimbing, canoeing, fishing and cycling tracks.

TRACK NOTES: no.

QUEENSLAND

Baron Gorge National Park

Just a short distance northwest from Cairns in Far North Queensland, Baron Gorge National Park is home to verdant rainforest, steep mountains, tumbling gorges and a host of wildlife. Activities include bushwalking (mainly short day walks), rafting, canoeing and kayaking. Camping is not allowed in the park.

TRACK NOTES: 'Tropical Tracks: Five great walks in Far North Queensland', by Catherine Lawson, Wild no 116.

Noosa National Park

Conveniently located on the Sunshine Coast, Noosa National Park is a coastal park and one of the busiest in the country. While you are not allowed to camp in the park, activities include many day walks, swimming, fishing, rockclimbing and snorkeling.

CANOEING NOTES: 'Padding the Noosa River', by Peter Sykes, Wild no 72.

Great Sandy National Park

The Great Sandy National Park is home to the magnificent Fraser Island, the scene of one of Australia's great wilderness battles and home to incredible long beaches and pristine freshwater lakes. Walks include the six-day Fraser Island Great Walk, many day walks, camping and swimming.

TRACK NOTES: no.

The view from Mt Graham towards the Hazards and Wineglass Bay, Freycinet National Park.



Daintree National Park

Located in Far North Queensland and home to what is thought to be the oldest continuously existing rainforest in the world (110 million years old), is the World Heritage-listed Daintree National Park. Broken into two distinct parts, Mossman Gorge and Cape Tribulation, activities include bushwalking, short day walks and longer off-track multiday affairs (see 'Across the Green Mountains' on page 44), there's also plenty of swimming, fishing and sea kayaking to be had.

TRACK NOTES: 'Thornton Peak', by Steven Nowakowski, Wild no 91.

Lamington National Park, South East Queensland

Located on the Queensland–NSW border, the Australian Heritage-listed Lamington National Park sits on the remnants of the ancient Tweed Volcano, and is renowned for its beautiful rainforests. Lamington is a bushwalkers' paradise and offers extensive opportunities, including the multiday Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk, many day walks as well as off-track walking.

TRACK NOTES: 'The Stinson Wreck', by John Daly, Wild no 90.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Flinders Ranges National Park

Home to the spectacular natural amphitheatre of Wilpena Pound, the Flinders Ranges National Park is a place of stark desert beauty and towering cliffs. The area is much-loved by bushwalkers and climbers alike, and both the Heysen and Mawson trails pass through the park, offering no shortage of day or overnight walks. The area is also well-known for its ancient Indigenous rock art and carvings.

TRACK NOTES: 'Respecting Your Elders', by Robert Lamp, Wild no 109.

Flinders Chase National Park

Located on Kangaroo Island, Flinders Chase National Park is famous for its sights more than its walking, being home to Remarkable Rocks, Admiral Arch and its colony of fur seals. For walkers there is network of tracks, but everyone must be out of the park by sunset.

TRACK NOTES: no.

Innes National Park

Sitting on the end of the Yorke Peninsula, Innes National Park is a small but spectacular coastal park famed for its rugged cliffs, sandy beaches and gypsum lakes. For bushwalkers the main attraction is short day walks, but there is plenty to do for those who like aquatic pursuits.

TRACK NOTES: no.

Murray River National Park

The Murray, Australia's longest river, flows through this small park just south of Renmark. The park is famed for its wetlands, which when flooded attract amazing birdlife. Activities include wildlife watching, short walks and canoeing.

TRACK NOTES: no.

TASMANIA

Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park

Part of the Tasmanian World Heritage Area, the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park is home to Australia's most famous multiday walk, the Overland Track. The park is filled with spectacular mountains and is one of the best bushwalking destinations in Australia, offering day walks and multiday adventures as well as rockclimbing and canyoning inside the park.

TRACK NOTES: 'The Central Reserve', by Andrew Hughes, Wild no 88.

Freyycinet National Park

On the drier east coast of Tasmania, the granite peaks of Freycinet National Park loom high over beautiful azure waters. The park is filled with activities for outdoor lovers, from short day walks to multiday adventures, rockclimbing and sea kayaking.

TRACK NOTES: 'Freyycinet National Park', by Stephen Bunton, Wild no 28.

Mt Field National Park

For a relatively small park, Mt Field National Park's flora is remarkably diverse, ranging from the towering forests at the base of the mountain to its alpine fagus-covered summit. A popular bushwalking destination, in winter the park is also popular with skiers.

TRACK NOTES: 'Tasmanian Short Walks', by Steve Robertson, Wild no 59.

Tasman National Park

utting out into the Southern Ocean, the Tasman National Park is home to some of the most dramatic coastline in Australia, its towering dolerite cliffs dropping into the ocean from great heights. The rugged coastline is popular with bushwalkers, rockclimbers and daring sea kayakers.

TRACK NOTES: no.

South-west National Park

Tasmania's Park and Wildlife Service didn't actually have visitor figures for the South-west National Park, but we have included it anyway as it has been the setting for probably more 'Wild' stories than any other park. Including over 600 000 hectares of wilderness, this is the cradle of many outdoor dreams for bushwalkers, paddlers, rafters and rockclimbers.

TRACK NOTES: 'Mt Anne Circuit', by Bron Willis, Wild no 110.

VICTORIA**Grampians National Park**

Rising improbably from the Wimmera plain, the last gasp of the Great Dividing Range, the Grampians National Park, is home to spectacular rocky summits and thick bushland. Activities include day and multi-day bushwalking, endless rockclimbing, fishing, swimming and canoeing.

TRACK NOTES: 'In the Footsteps of Tchingal: Exploring the Victoria Range', by Michael Hampton, Wild no 112.

Alpine National Park

Strangely enough, the Alpine National Park didn't make it into Victoria's top five most popular parks, but we thought we would include it anyway as the two that pipped it don't have much bushwalking. The Alpine National Park is home to Victoria's longest and most popular multiday bushwalks, which have inspired innumerable stories in Wild.

TRACK NOTES: 'Mt Feathertop 2', by Lucy Monle, Wild no 84.

Great Otway National Park

The heavily forested hills of the Great Otway National Park straddle the coastline south of Anglesea to all the way south of Apollo Bay. It's famed for its tall forests, ferny gullies, lakes and rugged coastline, which sweeps down to the ocean. The Otways is well-known for its bushwalking and is home to the Great Ocean Walk.

TRACK NOTES: 'A Meander on the Mild Side', by Chris Baxter, Wild no 111.

Dandenong Ranges National Park

On the outskirts of Melbourne, the Dandenong Ranges National Park is a mix of towering mountain ash forests, ferny

gullies and suburbia. Walking is mainly limited to short day walks, and many are accessible by public transport.

TRACK NOTES: no.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA**Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park**

The Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park is one of Western Australia's most popular national parks. On one side lies the rugged coastline, which stretches 120 kilometres from Bunker Bay in the north, to Augusta in the South and features granite formations, sugarloaf rocks and beautiful surf beaches. Peppermint trees, banksia and karri forest harbour native wildlife and seabirds, and disguise a network of caves – a large percentage of which are open to the public. The Cape to Cape walking track extends for 140 kilometres but can be broken into a number of shorter sections.

TRACK NOTES: 'Cape Naturaliste to Cowaramup Bay', by Catherine Lawson, Wild no 115.

Nambung National Park

In the heart of the Nambung National Park, located about three hours from Perth's city centre, lies the eerie Pinnacle Desert, where thousands of towering limestone pillars rise out of the sand. As well as this attraction, the park is lined with beautiful coastline, including the pristine Hangover Bay. Visit between August and October when the flowering vegetation blankets the land in bursts of colour.

TRACK NOTES: no.

Walpole-Nornalup National Park

Located in the southwest region of WA, the Walpole-Nornalup National Park is renowned for its towering karri and tingle trees. A popular feature of the park is the 40-metre high Tree Top Walk, located in the Valley of the Giants. The vertically challenged can enjoy the forest from the ground – the Ancient Empire walk lies below the canopy walk.

TRACK NOTES: 'Walking Walpole', by Graeme Spedding, Wild no 94.

Torndirrup National Park

Just south of Albany is the impressive Torndirrup National Park. The rolling Pacific Ocean has carved a natural bridge in the coastal granites, which run along King George Sound. Walks encompass stunning lookouts and spectacular blowholes. However it's important to be cautious, the Torndirrup Coastline has a reputation for accidents and deaths due to people slipping or being hit by freak waves.

TRACK NOTES: no.



A Lesson on Lentils

In the fourth of his series on food for lightweight bushwalking,

Andrew Davison tackles lentils

Lentils are a somewhat complex world of mixed names, sizes and colours. Due to their often lengthy cooking times, many are impractical for bushwalking. However, when you find lentils with a short cooking time you have discovered one of the perfect bushwalking food ingredients. They are light, last for months and involve no-fuss cooking.

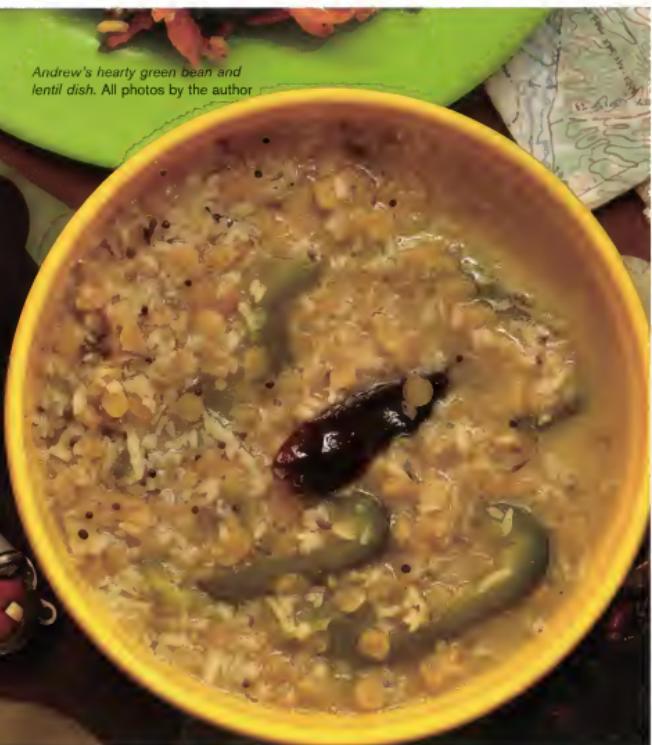
Two varieties of the few lentils that are suitable for bushwalking are:
Masoor dahl - also known as red lentils, these are small salmon-coloured lentils. They cook very quickly and turn a golden

colour when ready; they will cook in approximately ten minutes depending on what consistency you like. You can replace most other legumes with masoor dahl, adapting many other lentil recipes. However, the consistency and flavour of the dish will alter.

Moong dahl is a small yellow oval-shaped pulse, which is a skinned and split mung bean. They will cook very fast and can simply be soaked in initially hot water for two to three hours or overnight in cold water to be ready to eat. Another yellow pulse is toor dahl. Do not confuse these for moong dahl as they are larger and will take substantially longer to cook.

The advantage of lentils for bushwalkers is that not only are they compact, light and non-perishable, they contain high levels of protein. A balanced diet requires ten to 25 per cent of our intake of essential nutrients to be protein. In our normal daily diet our protein largely comes from consuming animal products. Walkers on extended trips may find it difficult to get their required protein intake. Lentils help alleviate this. Lentils have a mild, earthy flavour; I find they are best cooked with assertive flavours complementing the earthy undertone. Below are two recipes that use a delicious blend of spices, creating two very different dishes.

Andrew's hearty green bean and lentil dish. All photos by the author



GREEN BEANS AND LENTILS

Serves: two

You can make this dish by simply putting all ingredients in 2 1/2 cups of water, bringing the pot to the boil and simmering for ten minutes. It is still delicious, but omitting frying the spices reduces the flavours of the dish slightly.

Ingredients

3/4 cup of masoor dahl
2 dessertspoons of oil
1/2 teaspoon of mustard seeds
1/2 teaspoon of cumin seeds
1 dried red chilli
1/2 teaspoon of cumin powder
1/2 cup of dried green beans
1/2 cup of desiccated coconut
Salt to taste

AT HOME

Pack mustard seeds, cumin seeds, red chilli and cumin powder together. Pack desiccated coconut and green beans together.

IN THE FIELD

Place the lentils in a bowl with 2 1/2 cups of water and set aside to soak. Heat the oil and fry the spices until the mustard seeds begin to pop. Now add the lentils and water followed by the coconut and green beans. Simmer for ten minutes stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat, cover and let sit for five minutes. Season with salt and serve with rice or unleavened bread.

LENTIL AND CARROT SALAD

Serves: two

Eaten with unleavened bread, this salad becomes a complete refreshing meal. Omitting the use of the coriander, the salad still tastes great and will last for weeks.

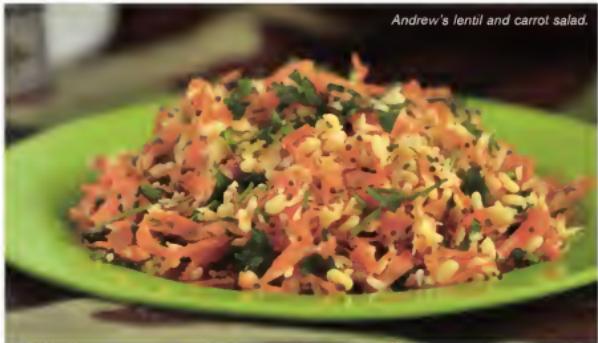
Ingredients

1/4 cup of moong dahl
1 large carrot
1/4 cup of desiccated coconut
A bunch of fresh coriander or 1 large dessert spoon of coriander puree (optional)
1 dessert spoon of oil
1 teaspoon of mustard seeds
1 dried red chilli
2 dessertspoons of lemon juice

IN THE FIELD

Soak the moong dahl in hot water for two hours. (If you wish to eat this for lunch the following day, let it soak in water overnight, drain in the morning and carry the soaked dahl in a plastic bag).

Grate or finely chop the carrot, place in a bowl with the coconut, dahl and coriander. In a frying pan heat the oil, add the mustard



seeds and chilli, fry until the mustard seeds begin to pop, remove from heat, let cool a little and add the lemon juice mix and pour over the salad and mix (the frying of the mustard seeds and chilli can be done at home and put into a watertight container with the lemon juice).

TIPS

- After measuring the quantity of lentils at home, spread them on a large plate, sort and pick out stones and other debris.

- Lentils cook more slowly if they are combined with salt or acidic ingredients, so add these last.
- It is said asafetida (a spice often found in Asian food stores) added to lentils while cooking can help reduce flatulence

Andrew Davison takes pleasure in the simplicity of being in the bush. He currently resides in Mongolia and thinks himself fortunate to live in a place with an abundance of untouched walking destinations.

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Seeing the Light

Craig Ingram gives some pointers for working with photography's most important element - light

Light is critical for every photograph and its quality can be the difference between a mediocre snapshot and an awe-inspiring image. The word photograph itself, coined in 1839 by mathematician, astronomer and experimental photographer John Herschel, draws from the Greek *phos* meaning light and *graphé*, drawing or writing, literally meaning 'drawing with light'. But, many people consider only the scene and composition when taking a photograph, neglecting the most important aspect, the light. Understanding light is the key to better photography. Its quality, direction and colour are all essential creative elements in your images.

Firstly, it is important to know when not to shoot. Bright, sunny days when the sun is high overhead are dreadful for photography, as we have the worst of all three elements: the light is harsh, bright with no colour, while the strong front lighting kills any interesting texture you may have in the scene.

Compare that with the light first thing in the morning, during the period of time photographers call the 'Golden Hour'. The light is rich and warm as it has to travel through more of the earth's atmosphere,

dissipating most of the blue end of the spectrum, leaving scenes bathed in warm red light. These warmer tones are more pleasing to the eye than the colder, harder light found in the middle of the day. This is why early morning and late evening are photographers' favourite times to shoot landscape and scenic images. An added advantage to shooting at this time of day is that the light is a lot softer. The variation between the brightest and darkest parts of the scene (known as dynamic or luminance range) is much smaller, making it easier for your camera to capture all the tones in the image. Digital sensors can only capture detail in a luminance range of about five stops, whereas the human eye can see about 13. Try taking a photo of a scene first thing in the morning and then again at noon on a bright sunny day, making sure you include the sky in the frame. Comparing the two you will notice the darker shadows in the second image, while there will often be no detail in the brightest areas of the image that had plenty of detail in the morning shot. You can even try placing your camera on a tripod in your back garden and taking a photo every hour during the day. Comparing the results will bring you closer to

understanding the dynamic nature of light.

The angle of the light is almost as important as the quality. As I have mentioned, front lighting tends to kill any texture in the scene, so it should generally be avoided for landscape images. However, it can be great for close ups and shooting animals, especially birds.

'Another interesting variation is to try shooting before sunrise or after sunset. The light is very blue, almost purple, as the scene is being lit from indirect light bouncing off the atmosphere. This light is wonderfully soft with no shadows at all, giving the image a rather surreal feel.'

Sidelight is what I constantly search for when shooting landscapes. Once again, the Golden Hours are great for this as the sun sits low to the ground emphasising the



While front lighting is dull for most landscape images it works well with animals, hiding shadows behind the subject and leaving a smaller dynamic range for the camera to deal with. Far left, overcast lighting is great for scenic and close up images. The soft light allows the camera to capture all the detail in the highlights as well as in the shadows.

Both images by the author

effect. The light rakes across the scene bringing out detail, creating interesting patterns, with long shadows adding an extra dimension. The Golden Hour changes throughout the seasons. In winter the sun sits lower in the sky than in summer, which makes it last longer during the colder months. This effect also alters with latitude. The sun drops from the sky in a matter of minutes when shooting near the equator, while the Golden Hour can last days if you travel far enough towards either pole. This is an important point to factor in when shooting in the tropics, as the light can get harsh very quickly in the morning, likewise it rapidly gets dark once the sun has set.

Backlight (shooting into the sun) emphasises shape and form, often creating silhouettes where the subject has no colour or texture. The results are generally simple and graphic, but can lead to some stunning images if done correctly.

Another interesting variation is to try shooting before sunrise or after sunset. The light is very blue, almost purple, as the scene is being lit from indirect light bouncing off the atmosphere. This light is wonderfully soft with no shadows at all, giving the image a rather surreal feel.

Obviously with no sun in the sky light levels are extremely low, but don't be afraid to experiment with shutter speeds of over a minute. You will need a tripod of course, but if you have been reading these articles for a while you will already know how important a tripod is.

Overcast days are another form of indirect lighting, there are no harsh shadows and a smaller dynamic range, however the light is blue, flat and boring. This doesn't mean you can't take photos though, you can adjust the white balance on your camera to 'trick' the camera into producing warmer images (try setting the white balance to 8000 Kelvin). You can concentrate on detail images, close-ups, waterfalls, etc, without all those bothersome shadows.

Light comes in a myriad of different shades, some good and some great. Next time you are out in the bush make sure you take a moment to consider the light. It isn't just another element in photography, it is photography.

Craig Ingram is an Adelaide-based nature photographer and writer. For more info about upcoming photography workshops go to craigingramphoto.com.au

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THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Searching for a rare marsupial in the Simpson Desert, *Steve Van Dyck*, discovers plague rats, kowaris and an *X-Files*-like phenomenon called the 'min-mins'.

In 1975 a few extraordinary things happened that would always make it easy for me to remember the year. Gough Whitlam was given the royal shunt from his Prime Ministerial office. In the winter, a mate and I loaded up my old VW Beetle with cans of water, petrol and Irish stew until its rear wheels were splayed-out and ready to snap off, then headed for the Simpson Desert. We were artless university students setting out to find a small, rare, desert marsupial known by the magical name kowari (*Dasyuroids byrnei*), but we would return with nervous twitches that would mark 1975 as the year our noctiphobia took root.

kowaris, because on the first night of our arrival at Sandringham Station (about 200 kilometres north of Birdsville), after setting our wire traps on the bare gibber plains and chasing hopping-mice for most of the night, by 1am we were astounded to find six kowaris sitting patiently inside our traps.

With kid gloves, we transferred the exquisite animals to holding cages and prepared to get them back to Brisbane as fast as the VW could plough through bulldust. By the next night we had reached Durrie Station in the Channel Country, made camp and gone out looking for native mice. As nothing much was

He headed directly away from the station house lights, but after a few sandhills came up facing them again. With a grunt he turned the truck around and retraced his tracks, which took us in a straight line back to where we had come from – and there were the station lights directly ahead of us again! I was beginning to think our tins of Irish stew had gone off in the heat. He dryly announced that these, in fact, were the genuine station lights and that the others had been 'min-min lights'. So with another grunt the truck was turned around and we headed off in the original direction.

Min-min lights? This was seriously weird news to city slickers, but we clearly had an Ancient Mariner at the wheel hell-bent on telling his story. By the time he'd regaled us with all the local folklore and the supernatural catastrophes surrounding the eerie lights, my hair was straining at the roots despite a brain below insisting it was all nonsense.

Further out on the lignum flats, we jumped out of the truck to look at a quail sleeping on the open plain, but as we walked towards it we noted with quiet reserve a bright bluish-white light shining coldly from the bushes behind our backs beyond the truck. This silent light made numerous changes in position but always appeared at ground level.

'Min-min lights,' our guide calmly stated. 'Cars in the distance,' I not-so bravely countered.

But cars or not, the light appeared to follow us intermittently wherever we went that night, until I genuinely began to feel

'Min-min lights? This was seriously weird news to city slickers, but we clearly had an Ancient Mariner at the wheel hell-bent on telling his story. By the time he'd regaled us with all the local folklore and the supernatural catastrophes surrounding the eerie lights, my hair was straining at the roots despite a brain below insisting it was all nonsense.'

That year the desert was experiencing the tail end of a rat plague. Even so, at night, a torch would show up the ruby-reflected eyes of hundreds of plague rats (*Rattus villosissimus*) outside their burrows; the sound of their screeching and fighting cutting through the night.

These conditions of unlimited tucker (i.e. baby rats) must have favoured the

showing up in our spotlights, we'd opted for an early night and returned to our camp to find a curious young stationhand from Durrie waiting in his Landrover to see what we were doing. After taking stock of our VW and its off-road limitations in the sand, he offered to take us spotting through the dune country in his four-wheel drive. We quickly accepted.



Could the common barn owl be the source of the dreaded 'min-min lights'? Frank Harrison

unnerved about getting out to look more closely at anything that involved a walk from the car. Then, around midnight, a profoundly unsettling thing happened. On our way back to camp (travelling north) a car's lights appeared a long way off, travelling east, towards us. The stationhand said it was most likely the manager coming home from the Saturday night movies in town (Birdsville).

For what seemed like a very long time, the other 'car' steadily converged on us without decelerating or dimming its lights and although we had no choice but to stop, it appeared as though a dreadful collision was still inevitable. The intensity of the light increased until the other vehicle must surely have been upon us... then in the eye of that blinding storm of confusion and light everything suddenly returned to normal and we all noted in unison not only how strange it was that we were still alive, but also the uncanny absence of sound throughout those frightening few minutes. The main road to Birdsville indeed – this was the road to Damascus with conversions only seconds away!

The stationhand dropped us off at our tent, leaving us with an invitation to come

down to the quarters if it looked like raining. All the nonsense about lights had been a bit too much and we prepared to turn in and sleep it all off. But, to our mortification and the ultimate loosening of our bowels, just as we were about to go into the tent, a brilliant white light suddenly materialised high above it in a scene more befitting Christmas cards and startled shepherds.

This we probably could have lived with given the late hour and what we'd just been through – but it wasn't the end. A single light and heavy pounding came from the lignum in a drainage channel near the tent and with it the most appalling, drawn-out growling and slobbering I had ever heard. We could hardly stay upright for our shaking legs, and with each of us standing at either end of the car facing out, we waited to die!

Suffice to say, this was all we needed to convince us that the time had come to move very quickly and quietly along. The kowaris made their non-stop, 1300 kilometre trip back to Brisbane as if VVWs could fly as well as they float.

Among various explanations for the phenomenon of the min-min (from atmospheric light reflection and luminous

marsh gases to UFOs) the most recent and intriguing comes from naturalist Fred Silcock who, in 2003, collated observations that ultimately attributed the lights to luminescent barn owls (*Tyto alba*); a tidy explanation given the world-wide distribution of both the owl species and the phenomenon of the lights (albeit under a variety of local names like Jack o' Lantern, Will o' the Wisp, etc). The only really untidy bit is the science, which is yet to demonstrate bioluminescence in that owl, or any other bird.

But, it's best to keep an open mind. And now is the perfect time to re-tiltate it. In response to two years of exceptional rain there is another rat plague happening in southwest Queensland right now, with long-haired rats and barn owls everywhere. I realise this is my big chance to face my demons, go back there and relive the disturbing events of 36 years ago, but this time with science and maturity by my side.

The only thing that could possibly forestall the trip is laying my hands on a white, 1965 VW...

Dr Steve 'Fox Mulder' Van Dyck is the Senior Curator of Vertebrates at the Queensland Museum.



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Carnarvon Great Walk

The Walk



Sandstone cliffs lining Carnarvon Creek. All photos by the author

Gary Fischer outlines a new walk through an ancient landscape in Central Queensland

With side trips, the Carnarvon Great Walk covers approximately 100 kilometres over six days. Cool, lush gorges with sheer sides, ancient Indigenous art, open grassy tablelands, mahogany forests and basalt-crested ranges are visited

as the walk traverses land that has seen habitation by humans for at least 19 500 years. Looking at a map of the area, it would seem that the main attractions are all found in the Carnarvon Gorge area on the walk's first day, but each day has

something unique to offer. The walk essentially takes you ten kilometres up Carnarvon Creek along the floor of the gorge, then climbs on to the surrounding ridges and tablelands to complete a circuit of the catchment of Carnarvon Creek.

WHEN TO GO

Due to high summer temperatures the Carnarvon Great Walk is closed from the start of November until the end of February. The Mt Moffat and Carnarvon Gorge sections of the park are still open during this time, so many of the gorge's most recognisable spots can be visited, although it is worth checking for track and road closures as summer storms are common. During winter, days are clear and warm but at night the temperature can fall to well below 0°C. Autumn and winter are the best time to visit as the vegetation has benefited from summer rain and walking conditions are at their finest.

SAFETY/WARNING

This walk traverses some very remote areas where the risk of both flood and fire are significant dangers at different times of the year. It would be wise to carry a PLB (personal locator beacon) as there is no phone coverage and you are unlikely to see any other walkers after the first day.

ACCESS

Carnarvon Gorge is located in central Queensland about 300 kilometres west

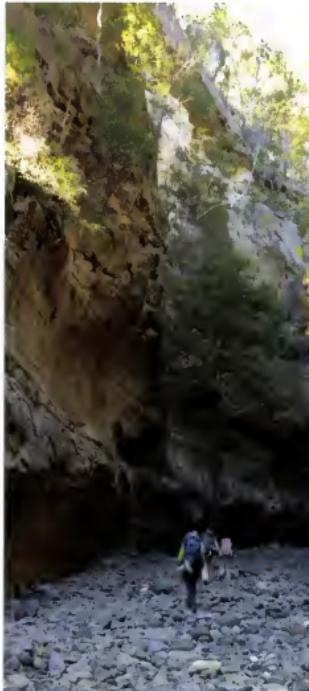
of Rockhampton and 600 kilometres northwest of Brisbane, and can be accessed at two points. The main start/end point is the entrance to Carnarvon Gorge, which is 246 kilometres north of Roma by road. It is worth noting that the last 15 kilometres can become impassible after heavy rain as the creeks are subject to flooding.

The walk can also be accessed at the West Branch campsite in the Mt Moffat area of the Carnarvon National Park. Again, this road is impassable after rain and a high clearance four-wheel drive is recommended. It is a 316 kilometre drive between the two access points, which makes for a long car shuffle if planning to do only half the walk.



THE WALK –**DAY ONE (13 KILOMETRES)**

Although day one may be the shortest in terms of distance, there is a lot to see on the way up to the Big Bend Camp. The track crosses Carnarvon Creek 14 times between the entrance and Big Bend, using large stepping stones to keep boots dry. The first side trip is up to the Moss Gardens in Violet Gorge, a much-photographed icon of Carnarvon Gorge. As with most of the side trips on day one, the area has boardwalks to keep walkers to the track. The next spot worth visiting is the Amphitheatre, where stairs access a fissure in the rock opening up to a huge roofless cavern. A little further on is Wards Canyon, a cool canyon that for a time housed possum pellets for trappers from the past, but now is home to the very rare king ferns, their five-metre fronds almost spanning the canyon. A kilometre further up the gorge is the Art Gallery, which has an extensive collection of Indigenous stencil art and engravings. Another collection of art is found at Cathedral Cave where Indigenous people inhabited the cave for over 3500 years. Big Bend is a short distance from Cathedral Cave and has a cool swimming hole, bench tables and a great campsite on the floor of the gorge.

**DAY TWO (17 KILOMETRES)**

The morning of day two provides the steepest and highest climb of the walk, ascending 640 metres in six kilometres. In the past, some of the steeper sections required pack-hauling, but there are now steel steps installed. From Big Bend, walk down Carnarvon Creek before turning south into the entrance to Boowinda Gorge. This is a stony gorge that narrows to only a few metres in places. The track out of Boowinda Gorge is up a steep, eroded ramp that climbs to the west about two kilometres from Big Bend. It is only marked with small orange track markers. As the track climbs from the moss and ferns of the gorge, the vegetation changes to grassy terraces and open woodland. Basalt scree slopes, sandstone ridges and a 100-million-years of geological history are crossed as the track ascends to the lookout at Battleship Spur. From here, there is a tremendous view back down into Carnarvon Gorge with its twisting white cliffs seen far below. The rest of the day's walk crosses grassy plateaus before descending scree-lined creeks and forests of silver-leaved ironbark. The ancient macrozamias (cycad) will be a constant companion for the rest of the walk as they emerge from the grasslands in increasing numbers. Gadds Camp is the first of the newly created Great Walk campsites. A composting toilet is provided as well as underground tank water accessed by levered pumps.



Clockwise from far left, Indigenous paintings of the Arch Chasm; The author and the view from the top of Nabooloo Ridge; The entrance to Carnarvon Gorge.

DAY THREE (18 KILOMETRES)

Now on the western side of the Great Dividing Range, the track follows the east branch of the Maranoa River before heading upstream along Angelina Creek. The track climbs steadily through open grassy woodlands until reaching an obvious high point with views back down to Carnarvon Gorge. It's worth taking a short side trip out on to Yurdu Bluff, where there's uninterrupted views north to Police Peak and a sweeping panorama round to the east and southeast to Battleship Spur. This is the perfect place for morning tea. From Gadds Camp the track follows an old vehicle track but about a kilometre past Yurdu Bluff the track turns sharply left towards West Branch. There is a waist-high signpost but it could easily be missed, so keep an eye out for it. The rest of the day is mostly spent descending through grasslands dotted with silver-leaf ironbark and huge macrozamias. As the track reaches the 1000-metre contour it is worth taking a 100-metre side trip to the north to take in view of the valley of Boot Creek. Nearing the West Branch Camp the track is lined with wattle. Once the west branch of the Maranoa River is crossed on a newly built suspension bridge, continue past the walkers' camp and pitch your tent at the West Branch vehicle camping area, which has fireplaces, toilets and water.

DAY FOUR (17 KILOMETRES)

Backtracking a few hundred metres from the suspension bridge, a left turn is taken

to the north before a slow but steady climb to the top of the Consuelo Tablelands. The track crosses many small creek beds, passing the bleached bones of brumbies, remnants of a time when the area was cattle country. It is worth looking into the human history of the area as there are true tales of 'cattle duffing' and murder, as well as a rich Indigenous history. The highlight of the day is the mahogany forest, which consists of tall, unlogged silvertop stringybark and Sydney blue gum. The area is cool and moist, and in parts the understorey is covered in bracken fern. There are about two kilometres of this forest, a sharp contrast to the last couple of days of drier, more open, grassy woodland forests. Now on top of the Great Dividing Range again, the track heads east through undulating woodland until the Consuelo camping zone is reached. Untreated water is available, but there are no toilet facilities. Keep an eye out for kangaroos and emus during the day, and greater gliders at night.

DAY FIVE (21 KILOMETRES)

The day starts with a slight climb through tall forests and an increasing number of macrozamias. The track then mostly descends slowly down to the next camping point. To get some great views back down into Carnarvon Gorge to the south, an off-track side trip is required. If you are confident with your navigation, a side trip to Nabooloo Head and out on to Nabooloo Ridge is well worth the

effort. The grass on this side trip can be shoulder height, the understorey crowded with macrozamias and tall trees above. There are many animal tracks that head off in different directions so take note of where packs are left so that they can be easily found on the return journey. The view from Nabooloo Ridge looks across to Battleship Spur and on down to the white cliffs of Carnarvon Gorge snaking into the distance. Once back on the track, it continues to head east to the Cabbage Tree camping zone. Again, untreated water is available from underground tanks but there are no toilet facilities.

DAY SIX (16 KILOMETRES)

The last day is mostly downhill, although there are some steep uphill pinches on the way. As the track reaches the eastern edge of the tablelands, it heads steeply down a narrow ridge on to Jimmys Shelf. The track follows an old stockmen's route, which allowed them access to the tablelands from the lowlands. It would have been hard going on horseback along this steep, narrow track. Once on to Jimmys Shelf, the track crosses the north and south arms of Arch Creek. Both crossings are surrounded by sheltered, dry rainforest and are good spots for a break before the steep climb on to Demons Ridge. Above this steep climb, is the Ogres Thumb. From the right angle it is easy to see why it is so named. Once on the top of Demons Ridge there are good opportunities for viewing Arch Chasm



Passing through grassy plateaus and forests of silver-leaved ironbark.
Below, the final crossing of Carnarvon Creek at the gorge entrance.



and the Devils Signpost to the north and the east. The track takes a southwesterly direction, intersecting with the Boolimba Bluff track after a couple of kilometres. The side trip out to Boolimba Bluff is a must if it is not covered in cloud, which occasionally happens in the wet. Once out at the Bluff there are great views back up the gorge and out to the southeast to the Woolpack, which is the square-topped

mesa in the distance. Evidence of the sandstone's undersea origin can be seen in the rippling formations near the lookout. The track down from the Bluff is steep with a number of steel ladders to assist on some steeper sections. Sandstone steps are also provided, as the track descends through the cliffline and on to the final crossing of Carnarvon Creek at the gorge entrance.

WALK AT A GLANCE

Grade: Moderate to hard (all but the first day are Class Five)

Length: Approximately 100

kilometres over six days with side trips
Type: Circuit walk. Many aspects of interest including the variation of landform and vegetation, and also the human history especially the Indigenous stencil art

Region: Central Queensland

Nearest town: Injune or Rolleston

Start/finish: The walk usually begins at Carnarvon Gorge information centre. The walk maybe shortening by starting or finishing at West Branch Camp in the Mt Moffat section of Carnarvon National Park but this would require a substantial car shuffle

Best time: April to September. The Carnarvon Great Walk is closed from the start of November to the end of February due to the heat at that time of the year

Special Points: This is a remote walk so parties need to be prepared. Consider carrying a PLB. Contact the rangers at least ten days prior to starting the walk so that you can check on track conditions and availability of water. Although in a dry part of the country, rain and storms can be heavy and restrict access for days after a rain event

Having first written an article for *Wild* no 11, Gary Tascher continues to venture into the wild in search of adventure. These days he is equally at home bushwalking, mountain biking or sea kayaking.

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> VENUS II EXTREME FOR THE EXTREMIST

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> VENUS II FOR THE SERIOUS

Capacity: 2 Adults
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> VENUS III FOR THE LUXURIOUS

Capacity: 2-3 Adults
Weight: 3.8kg (inner) 3.9kg (vestibule)
Area: 3.8m (floor) 3.8m (vestibule)

A Mile In Your Shoes

Steve Waters surveys walking shoes

Most walkers, heading off on an extended trip into the wild with heavy packs, will wrap the business ends of their bodies in a decent pair of boots built to withstand serious hazards (e.g. the Sodden Loddon plains, Old River to the Eastern Arthurs, Sydney on New Year's Eve). But, what about the times when you're not carrying a full load – that afternoon amble to the lookout, the quick bolt from work to your local crag, the unexpected coastal rock-hop, those pesky European cobblestones? This survey looks at walking shoes suitable for day walks and light trekking on well-formed tracks. Of course, there are day walks and day walks. Having descended Mt Bogong's steep Staircase Spur once in shoes (my boots were being resoled), I would never do it again. Shoes simply cannot offer the same ankle support as a good pair of boots and the more weight you're carrying and the rougher the track, the more support your feet need. Shoes also can't compete with boots when it comes down to traversing the wet stuff, mainly due to their lower cut, and reliance on weight-and-money-saving composite materials, although there's no reason you can't wear gaiters with shoes. The same rules for buying boots extend to walking shoes. Think about their intended usage: the terrain, climate and humidity likely encountered and the weight you'll be carrying. Above all, they must fit well and not rub. Check your

toes don't ride up against the tip when on a down slope (or stairs). Stiffer shoes, like boots, may need some breaking in. Lighter, flexible shoes tend to be more comfortable when the going is easy, while heavier, stiffer shoes offer greater support on uneven ground or when carrying a load. Upper materials might include leathers such as suede or Nubuck and these tend to be stiffer, heavier, more breathable, durable and water-resistant than synthetics. Synthetics on the other hand are lighter, cheaper and more comfortable from day one, requiring no breaking in and, when coupled with a waterproof breathable inner like Gore-Tex or eVent, prove just as good, if not better, in the wet. However, these high tech inners tend to drive up the price and their water resistance may decrease with wear, while breathability may be influenced by external conditions. If you're walking in dry, warmer climes, you won't need them and if the shoe is synthetic, your feet will breathe easier with lightweight mesh, though it may leak like a sieve when wet. Synthetic/leather hybrids look to marry the best features from both camps, but beware of too much stitching, which can be a weak point.

Footbeds are where you'll find most new technology and almost all will claim to be orthotically designed and include features like shock-absorption (e.g. Poron), antibacterials and moisture-wicking

agents. They'll dry quicker if they're removable. A good sole is also important, with softer soles being more comfortable and shock absorbing and the stickier rubber offering more traction. Harder soles are more durable and offer greater protection on rough ground. Vibram has been a quality sole-maker for some years and now offers a large range for most applications. Unlike boots, most of the surveyed shoes cannot be resoled. Check the design carefully for weak spots (poorly protected toe or heel, lace eyelets that could tear, stitching that could catch or fray) and water ingress points (does the tongue have a side gusset, is there too much stitching or mesh down low?). Check both longitudinal (toe to heel) and lateral (sideways) flexibility; the heavier the load, the less you want of the latter. Are there heel loops for easier donning and removal? How do the shoes look, could you wear them to work thereby replacing two pairs of shoes with one? (A great self-justification point for new kit!). Finally, any comfort rating is purely subjective. All the shoes surveyed were of high quality and easily met the survey spec, so any choice comes down to personal preference. The Scarpa Stratos and Mountain Designs Mojo hail from Italy, while the rest are manufactured in China. All shoes (size 42) were weighed by the surveyor and weights averaged across the pair to give a single shoe value.

SCARPA STRATOS \$250

This Italian master-cobbler's Scarpa SL is arguably the boot all others are judged by, so it's little wonder that the Stratos is an equally fitting offering. This beautifully crafted, full-suede shoe provides fantastic support, and coupled with a medium Vibram sole (one of the best in the survey), is equally at home on good tracks or the rough stuff. Stiffer than most of the surveyed shoes (bar the Càrn and Zamberlan), the Stratos really shines once off the manicured tracks, but it also looks so good you could wear it to work (I know I would). The toe and heel are reinforced, the lace eyelets strong, the removable footbed well padded, and there's a 3/4 length tongue gusset to keep out the water. The Gore-Tex inner is probably overkill, as this shoe will survive a serious dunking. At 498 grams, it's the heaviest of the pure shoes, and \$250 buys you a choice of black or tan.

scarpa.com.au



**NORTH FACE HEDGEHOG
GTX VCR III \$230**

Your feet sink into the Hedgehogs like into a beanbag. The most cushioned and comfortable shoe in the survey is billed as suitable for 'speed hiking' (I had to Google it, not surprisingly it's an American concept) and would be perfect for all-day wear and ambling, nay, sprinting, down those well-worn paths. The flexible, mainly mesh upper has a reinforced toe and heel and water resistance is aided by a Gore-Tex-lined inner. There's a 2/3-length tongue gusset, and boot-strength lace eyelets. The aggressive, medium Vibram sole is on par with the Scarpa's: a great balance between support and traction. There's a bit of lateral stiffness and coupled with that excellent sole, the Hedgehogs should be up for some rough action, though watch out for snagging the mesh and all that stitching. The ergonomic Poron-added footbeds are to die for. They come in black and grey, or olive and grey, weigh 478 grams and retail for \$230.


MONTRAIL ROCKRIDGE \$180

Montrail is in the business of making backcountry running shoes and the Rockridges are no exception. The lightest shoes in the survey (306 grams) are comfortable and well-cushioned on flat, even tracks or pavement and while the medium (non-Vibram) sole provides reasonable ground insulation, the all-mesh upper offers very little support. The toe is only minimally reinforced and there's too much low mesh, though the heel fares better and the tongue is gusseted, yet the whole package feels rather plasticky. This was the only shoe to fail the long, wet grass test, and while they're certainly comfortable enough to walk (and let's face it, run) all day on good tracks, most Australian day-walkers may prefer something sturdier and for the same price (\$180), the Vasque Mantra is probably a better choice. montrail.com

MOUNTAIN DESIGNS MOJO \$150


Looking like a retro skate shoe with a Vibram sole, the black, stylish, Italian-made Mojo was one of the most flexible and comfortable shoes surveyed.

Proving that leather doesn't need to be stiff, the supple upper comes with reinforced heel and toe and a soft, sticky rubber sole. Weighing in at only 375 grams, the shoe is nicely finished with reinforced lace eyelets and removable, well-padded, antibacterial

footbeds. Though the wide (leather) tongue is gussetless and some of the cosmetic stitching could leak after prolonged soaking, the leather displayed an acceptable level of water resistance and should prove durable. This is a shoe you could wear everyday, even

to the office and would be perfect for travelling and walking on good flat paths with minimum load. Great

value for \$150. I want a pair!
mountaindesigns.com.au



VASQUE MANTRA \$180

Hallelujah! This American offering is refreshingly unfettered of acronyms and mind-buzz technology claims. Proving that sometimes simple is best, the Mantra weds a Nubuck-mesh upper to a tried and tested medium Vibram sole, providing a nice balance between flexibility and stiffness. The toe is reinforced, the heel protected and the lace eyelets are up to the job. The footbeds are removable and adequately cushioned, while a wider last is available. Don't expect a great deal of water resistance – while the leather holds its own, there's a lot of stitching, and once water hits the mesh (especially behind the toe), combined with an ungusseted tongue, you'll be getting wet feet. That said, the Mantra is a good, honest, lightweight (432 grams) shoe at a good honest price (\$180), and would be perfect as an all-rounder in drier areas. vasque.com



CÄRN STORMCHASER EV MID \$300

Mud wallowers should look to English newby Cärn, which has designed a very impressive lightweight (well 620 grams is lightweight for a boot), mid-cut boot that offers plenty of ankle protection without compromising comfort. The one-piece Nubuck upper combined with an eVent-lined inner and generous moulded toe and heel protection offers an impressive level of water resistance. The medium rubber (non-Vibram) sole provides ample support though the supple (minimal breaking in) Nubuck might be a little too supple for heavy loads where you'd really want a boot with more stiffness. The lace eyelets are classic boot design, the tongue has a strong non-leather gusset and the ankle collar angles down towards the heel. The nicely cushioned, removable footbeds include Poron. It's more expensive than the shoes, but \$300 is still good value for such a crafted boot. A good option for that day walk above the snow line, or anywhere with a big incline.

carn-uk.com

ZAMBERLAN ZENITH GT RR \$270

The Zenith is another quality offering from a well-respected Italian boot maker (though the shoes are actually made in China) and there's not a lot of difference between this shoe and the Scarpa Stratos – any decision between the two would come down to fit. The Zamberlan favours a wider foot and it's slightly stiffer (in fact the stiffest in the survey) with a slightly higher cut. The upper is a mixture of suede and Cordura, the inner Gore-Tex-lined and there's ample support for off-track excursions, where it's probably happier than on pavement. Heel and toe are reinforced and the tongue well gusseted, though Zamberlan have opted for tape eyelets with a suede cover. I found the hard Vibram sole a bit slippery in the wet, and I doubt you'd get away with these in the office, but there's no denying they're a quality shoe made to last. Available in grey and tan, weighs 486 grams and retails for \$270.

zamberland.com



AHNU ELKRIDGE \$230

With a San Franciscan pedigree, Ahnu believes style shouldn't be sacrificed for function and the Elkridge is a good example of a serious walking shoe that your boss won't gag at. A full Nubuck upper is married to an eVent-lined inner for maximum water-resistance. Rubber toe and heel reinforcements, and boot-style lace eyelets ensure durability, while the tongue includes a strong gusset. Though the footbed is well cushioned, the non-Vibram sole is quite hard and with all that leather the shoes are pretty stiff, so expect some breaking in. Perfectly fine for defined tracks, these shoes really shine once you get on to mixed ground, feeling very strong and supportive. At 420 grams and \$230, they're both the cheapest and lightest of the full-leather shoes (barring the Mojo) and are available in grey or tan. ahnu.com

**KATHMANDU TERANIA MID \$260**

Two things you notice about the Terania. One, is how super-comfortable, unboot-like they feel. The suede and mesh mid-cut design feels quite lighter than its 512 grams and the inner and footbed are padded in all the right places. Ankle support and protection, as you would expect from this style, are also very good, and the soft-medium Vibram sole does a good job of soaking up the bumps. A generous strip of rubber protects the toe and the heel is reinforced. However, after wearing this boot for ten minutes, you'll notice the other thing, that your foot is becoming incredibly hot. Or at least mine did, as did the other testers I ran this one past. Not sweaty, just hot – rather strange given all that mesh. There's a lot of stitching, and the leather is oddly layered, with the joins on the outer, rather than the inner edge, which exposes the joins to abrasion and water. Having said that, the boot performed admirably off-track and on steep ridges with a stability that only the Stormchaser could match. kathmandu.com.au

TEVA RAITH AD \$230

Better known for sports sandals, at first look the Teva Raith appears rather boxy, but once you slip it on you'll realise it's a serious contender. The lightweight (416 grams) synthetic-hybrid upper is reinforced strongly at heel and toe and coupled with an eVent-lined inner provides a high degree of water resistance. The tongue is strongly gusseted and has tape eyelets, with the top two as hooks. The medium (non-Vibram) sole and cushioned footbed give a great ride over uneven ground, and some thought's been given to seams and stitching so there's not much to snag, though one of the heel loops frayed in testing. There's a little stiffening around the collar, though not as much as it's closest competitor, the North Face Hedgehog. The Raith, however, looks to have the edge in water resistance and would probably suit a colder, wetter application than the Hedgehog. Your \$230 buys you a choice of two rather garish colours. teva.com



■ The Bambino Reloaded

Australian company Mont has redesigned its brat-carrier, sorry, child-carrier, cutting a radical 400 grams from the previous model. **The Bambino** comes with a fully-adjustable harness with contoured waistbelt, large lower storage pocket, two zippered accessory pockets on the hip-belt and an upper dual compartment storage pocket. The child is not forgotten either, and the pack includes removable side stirrups, adjustable seat height, padded waistbelt, removable and adjustable headrest and dribble pad. The whole ensemble comes with a sun shield and weighs 2.95 kilograms. A Rainwear cover is available for an extra \$34.95, while the pack itself retails for \$349. mont.com.au



■ Look Mum, No Hands

Kathmandu has a nifty new LED headtorch out, the **Falcon 100 IR**. What makes it different from the 100 000 other headtorches on the market you ask? Hands-free operation. That's right, instead of having to do anything as tedious as pressing a button you simply have to wave your hand in front of this bad boy and the infrared sensor will turn the high beam on or off. Clever. Other than that, this torch offers regulated battery control and four lighting modes: high (100 lumens worth), red lighting, dimming and SOS signalling (in case your hands get chopped off). It runs on two AA batteries (battery life is four hours), weighs 96 grams and retails for \$119.98.

kathmandu.com.au



■ The Moondog

Continuing Mont's obsession with all things moon-related comes the **Moondog**, a synthetic fill jacket. When the going gets very wet and a down jacket will fail, the Moondog will excel, its Primaloft insulation keeping you warm even when soaked. The outer is made from a water-resistant Pertex Endurance shell and it comes with an array of pockets to choose from: two big torso pockets, an internal zip pocket and mesh dump pocket. The collar is fleece-lined and the cuffs are adjustable, while the whole rig weighs 420 grams. It retails for \$269. mont.com.au



■ A Shed, Hubba, Hubba

Men and sheds have a long-standing history in Australia, so blokes across the country will no doubt be breathing a sigh of relief when they hear about the new **MSR Gear Shed**. Designed as an annex that you can attach to the front of a Hubba or Hubba Hubba tent (we are breathlessly awaiting the Hubba Hubba Hubba), it provides an extra, luxurious 2.5 square metres of extra space for 'stuff'. The Gear Shed includes a small section of integrated floor so that you can keep some gear clean. The fly includes one DAC pole and the fully packed weight is 887 grams. It retails for \$269.95. spelean.com.au

■ An ACE in Your Pack

From the mind of Ian Maley (see his Portrait on page 74) at **Wilderness Equipment**, comes an innovative new **single-person tent**, the **ACE UL**. Designed with outdoor ed instructors in mind, the tent combines light weight and four-season performance with exceptional space and sit-up headroom. The space and headroom is thanks to a free-standing pole design that incorporates a unique 'dihedral-hub' that allows steeper-sided walls than most single-person designs. The ACE UL has a mesh inner, a 30-denier ripstop-polyester, silicon-treated fly rated to 1500 millimetres waterhead and a 70-denier nylon floor rated to 5000 millimetres waterhead. The minimum pitched weight (with two pegs) is 1.92 kilograms, while the packaged weight is 2.13 kilograms. It retails for \$485. A mesh-less winter version and a cheaper institutional model are also available. seatosummit.com.au



■ A Silver Lining

Australia's **Wilderness Wear** has produced a very nice new **sock** for walking, the **XTRA**. Topmost among its technical features is the X-Static and Coolmax cushioned footbed; X-Static has silver embedded in the yarn, which is used for its anti-microbial/combatting foot-stink properties. The upper section of the sock has special nylon 'ills' to reduce pressure on the top of the foot and around the Achilles area. And if you think that isn't enough, the top of the sock is made from a very breathable cotton mesh. All this technology comes for a mere \$15. wildernesswear.com.au



■ Heat But No Fire

Kiwi freeze-dried food manufacturer, **Back Country Cuisine**, has come up with a clever new product, the **Flameless Heater Pack**. In a country where the words 'Total Fire Ban' are not just a summer phenomenon, this is probably an ideal product for those who like to get out during the warmer months of the year. Compatible with all Back Country's freeze-dry meals, you just need to sandwich the prepared meal pouch between the inner packs of the heater pack, add 50 millimetres of water to activate the heat packs, fold the top over and voila! In 20-minutes' time you have a hot meal. A pack will heat two single meals or one double serve, and retails for \$6.50. enquiries@seatosummit.com.au

■ Silly About Ultra-Sil

When you are on to a good thing you tend to stick to it; **Sea to Summit** has continued with its current obsession with the Ultra-Sil fabric, producing the **Ultra-Sil Dry Day Pack**. This super-light, super compact day pack is incredibly convenient, while the roll-top seal, double-stiched tape sealed seams and water-resistant Ultra-Sil fabric will keep your possessions dry in all but the wettest conditions. It also comes in a range of delightful colours, from aubergine, to lime, orange-red, blue and black. RRP \$49.96. seatosummit.com.au



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KAYAKING AROUND AUSTRALIA

BY ANDREW GREGORY (EXPLORE AUSTRALIA, 2011, RRP \$34.95, EXPLOREAUSTRALIA.NET.AU)

This lovely book is testament to one man's travels around the coastline of Australia over many years. Though primarily intended as a guidebook, few sea kayakers would be tempted to carry the book in their expedition hatches due to its size and complexity. However, it would still be well worthwhile owning a copy. It is a document full of detailed maps and information on a huge variety of sea kayaking and open water

venues throughout Australia. It is backed up by some exquisite photographs that should inspire any budding paddler to explore our stunning coastline. And, although it would be a pity to destroy such a quality publication, you could always rip out the relevant section for a trip, or even make the sacrifice of carrying the whole book so that when you are sitting around the campfire on the final night of a great trip, it could be passed around to start discussion on the next venue to explore. In Andrew's words, 'Go out and explore this amazing country, enjoy yourself and stay safe.'

John Wilde



MUD MAP IPHONE APP

(MUD-INC, 2011, RRP \$59.99, MUD-MAPS.COM)

Like books, maps have also undergone a digital revolution in recent years and the folks at Mud Map are intent on leading the charge. Mud Map is an app that converts your iPhone into a GPS, featuring its own SmartTopo base map as well as the ability to create personal tracklogs and waypoints. The GPS features work really well, but it is Mud Map's AnyMap feature that really separates this app from its competitors. AnyMap allows the user to browse through a wide range of Australian and international

map publishers. Single map sheets can be purchased and then conveniently downloaded to your iPhone Mud Map app. It's a one stop shop if you like and it works really well. Of course, bushwalkers require detailed contour maps and readers of *Wild* will be pleased to see that map publishers such as Vicmap and LPMA are represented. Using the mCloud feature allows you to sync all of your waypoints, tracklogs and maps to your other devices such as your iPad or desk computer. The Mud Map app is available through iTunes.

Glenn Tempest



TASMANIAN SUMMITS TO SLEEP ON

BY KEVIN DORAN (DESDICHADO PUBLISHING, 2011, \$44.95, DESPUBLISH.COM)

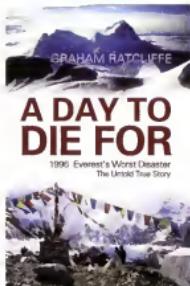
This book is mainly a selection of photographs of Tasmanian mountains. It is by a bushwalker and is really written for bushwalkers. The author, Kevin Doran, who has previously published a book on Federation Peak, reminiscences about his adventures camping on the summit of seven of the best peaks of the island state.

The peaks are Cradle Mountain, Barn Bluff, Eldon Peak, Frenchmans Cap, Mt Anne, Federation Peak and Mt Hopetoun. On these trips, the late Ossie Ellis, a former owner of

Pencil Pine Lodge near Cradle Mountain, often accompanied Doran. In a lot of ways the book is a tribute to Ellis. Many years ago, I can remember sharing Pine Valley Hut with Ossie Ellis on a winter trip and I remember him as a friendly character, full of fascinating stories and a remarkable bushman.

Doran's text is sparse but interesting. What makes the book are the photographs. These are bushwalker's photos. Not all of them are perfect from a technical or artistic point of view, but they all add to the story. I found some of the most appealing were shots of walkers outside their tents, perched on the summits in misty weather.

David Noble



A DAY TO DIE FOR

BY GRAHAM RATCLIFFE (MAINSTREAM PUBLISHING, 2011, RRP \$32.95, ADAYTODIEFOR.COM)

Much has been written about the tragedy on Everest on 10 May 1996 when eight climbers, including Rob Hall, Andy Harris and Scott Fisher lost their lives in a horrendous storm. Graham Ratcliffe, a member of an expedition that included Australia's Brigitte Muir, arrived on the South Col late on the afternoon of the 10th. Oblivious to the unfolding tragedy, his group bunkered down as many fought for survival not far from their tents. Ratcliffe returned to Everest, reaching the summit for the second time in 1999, but

continued to be troubled by inconsistencies in various accounts. Galvanised into researching the events leading up the tragedy to find the truth, he focussed on debunking the accepted view that the storm was not predicted. He discovers important omissions, bordering on deception, in a number of authoritative accounts such as Krakauer's as *Into Thin Air* and Breashears' *High Exposure*. *A Day to Die For* is an apt title that reflects Hall's obsession with summing on 10 May. I found this is a compelling book and it provides greater understanding of the key factors behind the decisions made that led to the tragic events.

Zac Zaharias

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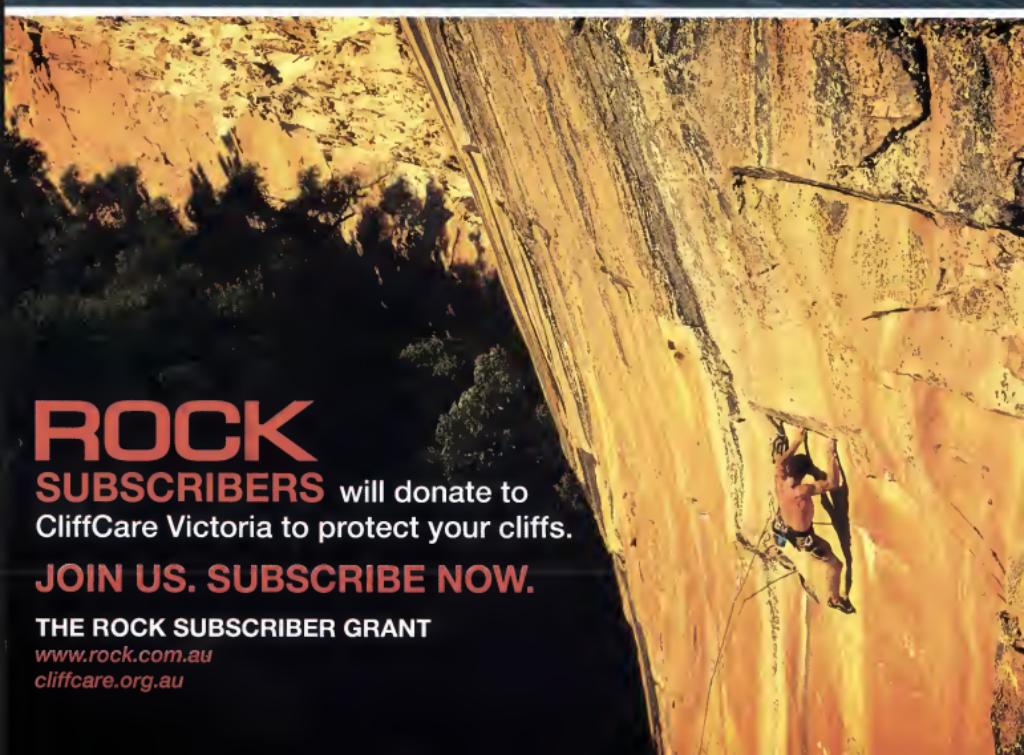
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Ian Maley

When I was a kid we spent a lot of time outdoors and in the bush. They were just weekend picnics, but I think they instilled a latent desire for the outdoors. Later, when I was at school, I played cricket and football. However, I always looked over my shoulder at the geography guys. I was interested in their trips to Central Australia but I didn't have any spare time. The opportunity to get outdoors came with the freedom of studying engineering at university in 1971. I immediately joined the outdoors club and got into caving, bushwalking and paddling.

I did a lot of paddling in the karri forests of Southwest Western Australia in the mid-1970s, including a trip down the Shannon River. It normally isn't much more than a creek, but in 1974 it was in full flood and we managed to paddle the entire length, which led to my friendship with Mal Hay. Mal was a member of the Swan Canoe Club and on the conservation committee of the Amateur Canoe Association. He thought that it was imperative for someone to record and document the rivers of the area. This led to a canoe-based exploration and documentation of the karri-forest rivers for the Department of Environment. I managed to paddle all but one of the rivers in the system in a single winter. This exploration also inspired a strong personal stance for the conservation of these unique and magnificent forests. It was around this time that clear-felling and woodchipping started in the area and through various efforts we managed to bring the concept of protecting 'Wild and Scenic Rivers' to public attention.

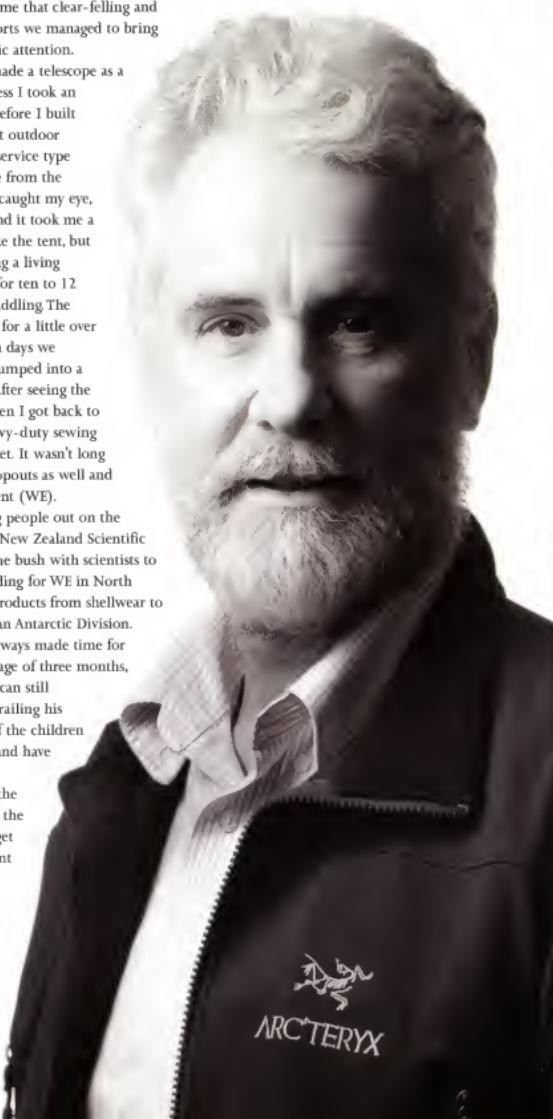
I have always had an interest in making things; I even made a telescope as a student. As soon as I started spending time in the wilderness I took an interest in designing and making gear and it wasn't long before I built myself a tent. In those days in Perth there was no specialist outdoor equipment available. The best you could get was old war-service type stuff, canvas tents and the like. Somehow I saw a catalogue from the Swedish manufacturer Fjällräven and they had a tent that caught my eye, so I decided to make one. I knew nothing about sewing and it took me a week to find suitable materials, then another week to make the tent, but it lasted well and was eventually the inspiration for making a living designing and creating outdoor products. I used this tent for ten to 12 months straight, travelling around Australia cycling and paddling. The highlight was when we took our bikes and packs to Tassie for a little over three months. In that time there were probably only seven days we weren't on our bikes or bushwalking. It was there that I bumped into a guy who worked in one of the outdoor shops in Sydney. After seeing the tent he told me that he would be able to sell them. So when I got back to Perth – I had already dropped out of uni – I bought a heavy-duty sewing machine and started making some gear for the local market. It wasn't long before I had a few friends working for me, mainly uni dropouts as well and in August 1977 I registered the name Wilderness Equipment (WE).

It was very part-time at first. I worked as a guide taking people out on the rivers, as well as organising expeditions for the Australian New Zealand Scientific and Exploration Society. We took young people out into the bush with scientists to do fieldwork. By the mid-1980s we had purchased a building for WE in North Fremantle and we started to branch out making various products from shellwear to tents as well as manufacturing equipment for the Australian Antarctic Division.

Although things were very busy with the business we always made time for family holidays. We took our kids into the bush from the age of three months, bushwalking, cross-country skiing, paddling and sailing. I can still remember my son, Kynan, sitting in our Canadian canoe trailing his finger in the river. Something must have soaked into all of the children from those experiences. They all have a love for the bush and have their feet firmly planted on the ground.

My wife and I have just come back from completing the Pyrenees High Route end to end and before that we did the Southern Ranges Traverse to Precipitous Bluff, so I still get out a lot. We inherited a yacht in 2003 and we have spent a lot of time on the water. Along with a number of walking trips. When we have time we plan to head off for a six-month round-the-world adventure. I still have a lot of ideas and designs that I want to explore, but these days there's no reason you can't merge this sort of work with travel.

Interview and photo Craig Ingram



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